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**"While it is true private wealth can help alleviate poverty through charity, charity should be the business of giving love. When it comes to the giving out of love, there's nothing too small and nothing too great."**

— Fan Baojun, president, China Charity Federation

By Yu Shanshan

A seemingly harmless statistic has stirred up millennia-old hatreds and ignited a passionate debate within Chinese society about how a socialist nation should adjust to the vagaries of a capitalist economy.

CCTV News Channel program "News Room" reported that of all donations to the China Charity Federation, mainland businessmen had donated less than 15 percent. The majority of donations came from Hong Kong, Taiwan and overseas countries.

As the income gap grows (See *Rich Man, Poor Man*, page 7) and as many former *Forbes* magazine rich list billionaires flee the country or go to jail, popular sentiment is reportedly swinging against the "heartless rich".

The CCTV statistic prompted a wave of newspaper editorials juxtaposing the skinflint entrepreneurs of the Chinese mainland alongside the supposedly philanthropic foreign role models such as Microsoft CEO Bill Gates, who has reportedly donated \$23 billion of his personal assets in the last four years.

But now the man behind the statistic, who fought CCTV to prevent it from being broadcast, states bluntly that not only is the figure misleading but also unfair to the genuine philanthropy of many mainland Chinese millionaires.

"Looks are deceiving," said China Charity Federation (CCF) president Fan Baojun told Beijing Today. Having just returned from a trip to Europe, Fan said he and his colleagues had "successfully publicized Chinese charity projects underway and attracted interest from local overseas compatriots".

Agreements had been made on a cooperation project in northwest and southwest China with

## Charity Chief Defends Domestic Fat Cats

Denounces 'unfair' reports that philanthropy is dead on the mainland



A summer 1998 flood victim collects a contribution from the China Charity Federation.

Photo provided by CCF

an Islamic multinational charity organization, which, according to Fan, has plenty of capital.

"Yesterday, after a three-hour talk with US 'Smile Train', we settled on a plan that they will offer free operations to another 20,000-30,000 Chinese cleft lip child sufferers.

"Every operation costs 2,800 yuan and if we can reach that figure of 30,000 in 2005, that's a big contribution of about 80 million yuan."

### Statistics lie

The infamous "15 percent" derived from accounts of the Federation's last three years of donations. The total the Federation received during that period was 560 million yuan; and in the 10 years since the Federation was established in 1994, the total is over 1.5 billion yuan.

Yes, that money mainly came from international organizations and multinational companies, Fan admits. But the reason for this regional imbalance is simple: "As a national charity federation with a good reputation in the world, our standpoint is to seek foreign donations. Thus one of the biggest goals of the CCF is to attract more international donations, because some of those organizations do have big sums of money and believe in us and are willing to lend a hand."

The place to go looking for Chinese philanthropists is in provincial and local public welfare organizations and charity federations. "We have over 2,000 such organizations registered – mainly collecting money from local entrepreneurs and for them, the percentage of mainland entrepreneurs' contributions will be much, much higher."

Taking part in local charity activities, Fan found many local entrepreneurs really do contribute.

"If we must judge this percentage of donations, you should not merely pull out random statistics from the CCF, which devotes much of its energy to attracting foreign donors with a lot of money.

"If you closely analyze the source of donations in some provincial public welfare organizations, you may find 80-90% derives from domestic successful entrepreneurs – who are, if you must call them this – 'the rich'."

### Carnegie call

Two lists – the Rupert Hoogewerf and the *Forbes* lists – released heel on heel this May, provide more ammunition for those who hate the rich: By comparing the rich list with the philanthropist list, readers quickly conclude that the no. 1 on the rich list is not necessarily the no. 1 donor to charity.

Fan also pays attention to these lists, but for him publication of the lists should not foster fear and jealousy, but instead should celebrate philanthropy and public-spiritedness. The list, he said, should encourage other billionaires to "give out their love and show their responsibility towards society."

Besides, lists don't reveal the whole truth, warns Fan.

"I have seen that even when some entrepreneurs have given no less money than other names published on the list, they are not counted."

A lot of donors demand no publicity, Fan explains. There's a group of "invisible billionaires" reports *Shanghai Tatler* magazine.

"Sometimes we wanted to re-

port to the public about these charitable people's stories and we go to ask their opinion. We get replies like 'Please keep this secret. I'm not doing it for fame.

"I have some money, and use it to do some good things. It's a donation for society not myself."

### Fearful rich

It is hardly surprising that in a country with a violent history, many private entrepreneurs prefer to hide their wealth for fear of class envy or hatred, possibly not wanting to endanger their fami-

lies' safety. Fan says in the Chinese mainland, the rich often fear publicity will bring about the unwanted attention of the government, Party and society.

Fan agrees that despite the obvious benefits of a market economy, one drawback is a growing wave of "hatred for the rich" in society.

Another reason a mainland entrepreneur often chooses to keep schtum is he fears others who learn of his generosity will camp out on his doorstep.

### Forbes Magazine 2004 China Philanthropist List

Rank	Name of the board chairman	Company	2003 donations (RMB m)
1	Chen Weifeng	Yingtong Group	3.447
2	Guo Guangchan	Fosun High-Tech Group	1.848
3	Wang Jianlin	Wanda Group	1.601
4	Lou Fuzhong	Guangsha Holdings	1.500
5	Zhai Shaojun	Jiangsu United Force Industrial	1.447
6	He Hengjian	Guangdong Midea Group	1.150
7	Liu Chuanzhi	Lonovo	1.068
8	Xu Rongmao	Shimao Group	1.035
9	Xu Ming	Shide Group	1.017
10	Liu Zhiqiang	Xiangjiang Group	1.008

### Forbes Magazine 2004 China Rich List

Rank	Name	Wealth(usd hm)	Company
1	Larry Rong Zhijian and family	14.98	Citic Pacific Group
2	Huang Guanyu	13	Eagle Investments
3	TimothyChen Tianqiao and Family	12.76	Shanda Networking Development
4	Xu Rongmao	8.4	Shimao Group
5	Lu Guanqiu	7.74	Wanxiang Group
6	William Ding Lei	6.68	NetEase.com Inc
7	Liu Ronghou	6.5	New Hope Group
8	Du Sha	5.3	The Home World Group
9	Liu Yongxing	5	East Hope Group
10	Zhu Mengyi and family	4.36	Hospson Development

"Charitable donations were originally a voluntary activity, but the public is changing it into a mountain of 'musts' on the shoulders of Chinese entrepreneurs. It's really not so fair," Fan said.

"While it is true private wealth can help alleviate poverty through charity, charity should be the business of giving love. When it comes to the giving out of love, there's nothing too small and nothing too great."

### Who is rich, anyway?

In Fan's world, it's really hard to say who is really rich.

"For example, one person might have 100 million yuan and donate 1 million yuan, or 1 percent of his assets. Another, who has 100,000 yuan, might donate 50,000, or 50 percent of his original assets.

"Although the first donation is 10 times bigger than the latter, it's hard to say whose love is greater."

Fan sees his role as more like a priest who "preaches the Gospel". He is in no hurry to dig money out of entrepreneurs.

"You must give them time to build their big profits. After all, another donation they give to society is they generate wealth for China and raise a group of employees."

Fan never asks for money.

"What I do is publicize. I believe they will finally donate something, and that's enough. In contrast to 10 years ago, nowadays more and more people knock on my door and tell me they hope to give me something, and there is even competition about getting a project."

### Chinese characteristics

"To die rich is to die disgraced," wrote Andrew Carnegie, the American capitalist icon who typifies modern charity.

But this idea doesn't tally with traditional Chinese culture, because of the importance of family in Confucian culture and a notable absence of inheritance tax throughout Chinese history.

Rather than citing "it is more blessed to give than to receive," Chinese people tend to adhere to the philosophy "Send charcoal in snowy weather".

Thus, the wealthy tend to donate in times of crisis, such as floods and famines, when all Chinese pitch in with money from their pockets. But Chinese are not yet accustomed to the western habit of long-term donation plans.

"Generous" foreign multinational companies sometimes prefer not to mention another key factor in their philanthropy: tax deductions. Normally, Chinese law permits only a maximum 3-percent deduction from a company's annual turnover.

But on April 30, 2003, the State Taxation Administration announced that it would grant 100-percent deductibility for all cash and materials that companies donated in the fight against SARS. Corporate donations – mostly state-owned – soared soon afterwards.

Fan says seven national charity organizations including the Federation have permission from the State Council to enjoy a permanent 100 percent tax deduction. But more preferential policy ideas are needed, he said.

Fan contends that charity is "not government work, but society's work." The Federation, he says, "should be a service organization that passes on love. We cannot do without love."

Photo by Wang Xiaoxi

EXECUTIVE EDITOR: JIAN RONG

EDITOR: HOU MINGXIN

DESIGNER: PANG LEI



# Rigid Rules Issued to Stop IPR Violation

By Chu Meng

China is intensifying its fight against rampant infringement of intellectual property rights (IPR) and leading the way is a new judicial interpretation of domestic criminal law that was issued by the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate on Tuesday and took effect the following day.

The new interpretation allows for the sentencing of people convicted of producing and selling fake registered trademarks or products with counterfeited trademarks with economic

values of 50,000 yuan or more. Previous rules set the bar for punishment at 100,000 yuan.

"We should not only sentence offenders in a determined manner, but also make it economically impossible for criminals convicted and sentenced to commit crimes again," Cao Jianming, vice president of the Supreme Court said.

Cao added the court had firmed up legal definitions of terms such as "without permission of the copyright owner" and "reproducing and distributing" to make it easier to prosecute offenders.

Domestic companies and multinationals have been looking forward to the new, stricter criteria, required in keeping with China's commitments to the World Trade Organization, for protecting their brands in this country.

Media products are one of the main focuses of the new rules, according to which anyone convicted of making more than 5,000 unauthorized copies of copyright-protected literature, music, movies, television programs or software can be sentenced to three to seven years in prison.

Witting accomplices that act as

import and export agencies for illegal products can be held similarly accountable. "Giving help-providers the same criminal punishment will definitely strengthen our efforts to crack down on IPR violations," Cao said.

Protecting intellectual property rights was not only necessary for China in honoring its international promises, but would also improve the domestic trade and investment environment for foreign investors, protect the interests of domestic companies and boost the national economy, he added.

## Central Bureau Takes Over Regional GDP Releases

By Annie Wei

Starting in 2005, the National Bureau of Statistics will be responsible for releasing gross domestic product data for different provinces and regions of China, Li Deshui, general director of the bureau, announced at a Monday meeting.

The State Council gave the bureau the power in order to improve the veracity of publicized GDP data and enact major changes in regional GDP accounting, such as setting up joint-auditing systems between areas, Li said.

The National Bureau of Statistics would continue improving GDP accounting next year by unifying formulas, methods and standards and ensuring the genuineness of basic data, starting with such industries as manufacturing, forestry, fishing and aquaculture, construction, retail and wholesale, trade and food service, he said.

The bureau will not announce the final GDP information for different regions in 2004, but start with figures for 2005.

## Responsibility for Food Safety Shifts

By Chu Meng

The General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) will take responsibility for governing and ensuring food sanitation in order to guarantee public safety starting the first day of 2005, CCTV International reported Sunday.

The administration has already introduced new food sanitation supervision and governing mechanisms and will put in place different standards for different enterprises in keeping with the importance and type of their products and their production capacities.

First-class important meat, dairy and food additive products, along with large-scale enterprises, will fall under the direct oversight of the administration in its new role. Licenses for other kinds of food products and small and medium-sized enterprises will be handled and granted by provincial-level departments authorized by the AQSIQ.

"Frequent inspections and quarantines will be adopted to ensure the stable safety of food products made at licensed enterprises," Ji Zhengkun, director-general of AQSIQ's Department of Quality Supervision and Control said.

## Annual Enterprise Checks Updated

By Annie Wei

The traditional method of checking local enterprises has ended and starting January 1, the results of annual inspections of Beijing businesses would be publicized through the Internet, Lu Hao, vice mayor of Beijing said on Monday.

Related government bureaus such as the Committee of Municipal and Rural Construction, Personnel Bureau and City Planning Commission had updated their procedures so that the results of annual checks could be published online, Lu said, adding notification of inspection would come via email, mail or fax instead of through confidential requests.

Lu also said inspections related to international goods transportation agents, preferential tax policies, commodity and material markets, broadcasting and TV production companies, and medicine production certificates would be cancelled.

## Germany to Offer Individual Tourist Visas to Chinese

By Pan Hao

Independent Chinese tourists will have a new destination to consider next year, as the German National Tourism Board announced on Sunday that it would start issuing individual tourist visas for Chinese people in 2005, Monday's *Beijing Times* reported.

Unlike the group tourist visas currently offered to Chinese citizens, the new visas will allow people to apply for entry to Germany on an individual basis. The necessary paperwork, which includes air tickets, proof of accommodation and detailed traveled plans, can be filed at the German Embassy in Beijing.

Xu Shengli of the German National Tourism Board said Chinese tourists to Germany spent an average of around 3,000 euros per person on their trips.

# Courts to Get Elected Juries in 2005

By Chu Meng

Judges around China will have less say in court cases next year when the country introduces elected juries to its legal process. The juries, which will start sitting in on hearings and trials on May 1, 2005, will have equal powers with judges, the Supreme People's Court and the Ministry of Justice said at a meeting that closed last Saturday.

Candidates for jury seats, all of whom must have at least two years of college education, would be chosen through elections in January and February, the court said. People that make the final cut for the first juries will undergo professional training between March and April before being authorized by county-level legislatures.

China currently has about 24,000 jurors, but none were chosen by electoral processes. Over 40 percent were hand-picked by courts, while almost 24 percent were approved by court officials after being recommended by local authorities.

Xiao Yang, China's supreme justice and president of the Supreme Court vowed to improve the country's judicial capacity to meet the needs of economic development in a keynote speech at the meeting. Xiao said the juries would be called on to strike hard against serious criminals and crack down on financial and economic fraud, intellectual property infringement, human rights violations and abuses of official power.

"To build a clean and fair judicial system, judges can provide jurors with cues or instructions on the law, but implication on specific case identification or pressing ideas on jurors is strictly prohibited," Jiang Xiangchang, vice president of the Supreme Court, said at the meeting.

Jurors would be appointed by the standing committee of legislature and automatically relieved of their duties once their five-year terms expired, Jiang said.

"The number of judges in China will increase by 10 percent over the next few years to make up for the country's inadequate trial force," Xiao said.

# Laws Set to Protect Religious Freedom

By Chu Meng

Regarded as a significant step forward in the constitutional principle of ensuring citizens' freedom, the Regulations of Religious Affairs were signed into official law on November 30 by Premier Wen Jiabao and will take effect on March 1 next year, the Xinhua News Agency reported last Saturday.

The new regulations are a set of comprehensive administrative rules concerning religious affairs in China intended to explicitly specify the legitimate rights of religious groups and protect religious sites and religious people. They also offer guidance on religious affairs involving state and public interests.

Comprised of 48 articles with seven chapters, the regulations are designed to deal with new situations and issues that have emerged in recent years with China's rapid social and economic development. During the six-year process of discussing and drafting the rules, the drafting department conducted thorough investigations and research into domestic religious affairs and conscientiously listened to comments from involved parties and experts from the fields of law, religion and human rights, and especially from representatives of religious circles.

In 1994, the State Council issued two regulations on the management of sites for religious activities and on foreign nationals' religious activities in China. When the Regulations of Religious Affairs come into effect, the first of those previous rules will be abolished, while the regulations on foreign nationals' religious activities will remain valid.



A huge bell was hung in Chongqing on Wednesday to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the gas disaster that killed 243 and forced more than 40,000 people from their homes in the municipality last year.

Photo by Photocome

## Australian Olympic Team Helping Capital Cash In

By Annie Wei

The official launch of China (Beijing) Access 2008, a program to draw investment to the capital connected to the Beijing Olympics, was held by the Beijing Investment Promotion Bureau and the Australia Pacific Rim Forum last Friday. Eight international corporations, including Standard Chartered Bank, will sponsor the project and provide funding.

The foreign partner in the project is a team of former organizers of the Sydney Olympics in Australia in 2000, including Michael Knight, former chairman of the Australian Olympic Committee and Alan Carrol, chairman of the Australia Pacific Rim Forum.

In the four years before the Sydney Olympics, the team managed to draw US\$375 million in foreign investment into around 50 Australian companies, which allowed them to open 1,000 new jobs. The 2000 Sydney Olympics team managed to bring in more than 50

percent of the investment that flooded into Australia in connection with the Games.

The project plan calls for the Australian partner to work with the Beijing Investment Promotion Bureau to create promotional materials targeted at international investors, to organize small, seasonal promotional exhibitions in Beijing and to coordinate related events in Europe, North America, Australia and Asia.

The expressed goal of the project is to bring in \$1 billion of investment to Beijing and China between now and 2008, particularly into high-tech industries such as biotechnology, IT and communications, energy and environmental protection.

Beijing Vice Mayor Lu Hao said at the launch that Beijing was forming a giant Olympic economic market. "The project will build a bridge between China and international investors, which will provide excellent investing opportunities and push Beijing to be better known by the world," Lu noted.

## New Year to Bring Lower Custom Tariffs

By Annie Wei

The State Council has approved further reductions of national customs tariffs starting the first day of 2005, the Xinhua news agency reported last Friday.

Average tariffs covering more than 900 items would be cut 10.4 to 9.9 percent, among which those for agricultural products would drop to 15.3 percent from 15.6 percent and tariffs on industrial products would fall half a percentage point to 9 percent, it said.

In keeping with its commitments to the World Trade Organization, China will continue most-favored nation tariff rates on more than 200 imported items, but can maintain customs quotas for certain agricultural products such as wheat and soybean oil and impose compound duties on frozen chicken, beer and cameras.

As set out in the Bangkok Agreement, China will offer agreed tariff rates, even lower than most favored nation tariffs, on certain products from Pakistan and other countries, zero tariffs on fruits and vegetables from Thailand and Singapore and mutually beneficial agreements with Hong Kong and Macao. Products from Laos, Cambodia, Bangladesh and some African countries will also enjoy most-favored nation tariffs.





Cherry's QQ

GM's Spark

# GM Accuses Chinese Carmaker of Swiping Design

By Sun Yongjian

American auto giant General Motors (GM) has filed a lawsuit with Chinese court against Cherry, a domestic car maker, on charges of unfair competition, the Guangzhou, Guangdong Province-based *News Express* newspaper reported last Saturday.

A source from Cherry's public relations office told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday that the suit had been accepted by the No. 2 Immediate

People's Court of Shanghai.

GM had also filed an accusation against Cherry for violating the intellectual property of GM-Daewoo, a South Korea-based subsidiary, in designing the domestic company's QQ model cars with the China's State Bureau of Intellectual Property.

"The QQ's exterior design is very similar to our Spark car, which was designed based on GM-Daewoo's Matiz car," Huang Dejian, the chief legal consultant

of GM-Daewoo told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday.

"The production of the QQ was not authorized by GM-Daewoo and Cherry claims their car was independently developed. We have the responsibility to protect our corporation and our intellectual property."

Huang said Chinese authorities had suggested the two sides solve the issue through mediation, but Cherry had not responded.

"Cherry has gone on export-

ing its products to other overseas markets, so we decided it was time to solve the matter through legal channels," he added.

The Cherry employee insisted the QQ was designed in line with international standards and 24 related patents had been registered with the State Patent Bureau.

"We have not violated the intellectual property of the Spark car and we are ready to solve this dispute through legal means," he said.

## ICBC Kicks Off Star-level Services

By Sun Yongjian

The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) Beijing Municipal Branch has set up a five-star service center called the 8<sup>th</sup> Fortune Center, the bank announced on Tuesday.

The center, intended to serve wealthy customers with individual deposits of 500,000 yuan to 2 million yuan, started operations on Sunday, the bank's news release said.

"Although ICBC currently only has four five-star centers nationwide, the bank plans to set up around 100 three-, four- and five-star service centers to specially serve wealthy clients," a press relations employee of the bank surnamed Zhang told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday.

The new center was well equipped to handle all kinds of client needs, providing machines for self-service and securities, insurance, foreign exchange and other transactions, the news release said.

"ICBC has always been considered a bank for common people and most Beijingers have accounts with the bank. But it is sure to face still competition from foreign banks, which will mostly aim at higher-end customers, when the domestic banking market is completely opened to overseas institutions in 2006," Fan Zhigang, vice president of the bank's financial research institute said.

"You can be certain that more star-level service centers will be set up in the near future."

The proportion of wealthy clients among the bank's customer bank is expanding and they need a wide range of services, like those provided at the starred centers, Fan said.



Photo by Hu Jinxi

Beijing Media Corp Chairman Zhang Yanping (right), President Sun Wei (second from right), Deputy Chairman Zhang Yabin (second from left), Executive Director He Pingping (right) and Secretary of the Beijing Communist Youth League Guan Chenghua (center) toast the success of the media group's Hong Kong IPO on Wednesday, when shares opened at an impressive HK\$23.75. Beijing Media, the advertising unit of Beijing Youth Daily and the first Chinese mainland media firm to list overseas, raised over HK\$1.04 billion (1.1 billion yuan) through the public offering.

## China Plans New Nuke Company for 2005

By Deng Minjie

The Chinese government is preparing to establish a new state-run corporation in charge of steering the country's nuclear power development as China strives to meet its pressing power needs.

State Nuclear Power Technology Corp (SNPTC) would be set up next year and overseen by the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council, a source from the company's preparatory

office who requested anonymity said last Thursday.

"The corporation's first item of business will be a power-service reliance program related to the construction of two new reactors. Both are located in eastern China, one in Guangdong Province and the other in Zhejiang Province," the source told *Beijing Today*.

The nine nuclear power plants operating in the Chinese mainland produce less than two percent of the country's power

supply. The Chinese government is planning to build dozens of new plants to raise that figure to four percent by 2020.

The firm would be in charge of organizing equipment suppliers to bid for contracts related to the projects. "The bidders for the project include Westinghouse Electronics of the US, Faramatome S.A., a subsidiary of France-based Areva, and Russia's AtomStroyExport," the company insider said.

## Nissan, Dongfeng to Build Big Engine Plant

By Qiu Jiaoning

Nissan Motor Co. and Dongfeng Automotive Investment said on Tuesday they will spend \$362 million to establish a new engine production facility in Guangzhou under Dongfeng Motor Co., Ltd. (DFL), a joint venture set up by the two companies.

The joint venture's statement said the large facility would focus on assembling Nissan's new generation of

global engines and supply Dongfeng Motor's passenger vehicle plants in Guangzhou and elsewhere in China starting in early 2006. The plant's production capacity is expected to hit 360,000 units by 2008, at which point it will have a workforce 1,500-strong.

"The construction of the engine plant is a significant step forward in DFL's strategic development in China, and it will

provide a solid base for our business expansion," Mamoru Yoshida, managing director of the joint venture was quoted as saying.

DFL already operates a plant in Guangzhou manufacturing Nissan Sunny and Bluebird sedans and in September opened a new plant in Xiangfan, Hubei Province to make Nissan Teana cars. The joint venture currently has an annual production capacity of 240,000 cars.

## Carlyle, Prudential to Buy Stakes in China Pacific Life

By Deng Minjie

American equities firm Carlyle Group and Prudential, a major US-based insurer, signed a deal worth up to \$400 million to buy a 24.9 percent stake in Shanghai-based China Pacific Life Insurance (CPLI) last week after several months of negotiations, Netease.com reported last Friday.

CPLI holds an 11 percent share of the domestic insurance market and wants to attract foreign capital to expand its presence and move into the financial arena, the report said. Carlyle, which has invested \$150 million in China, said earlier this year it aimed to inject more than \$1 billion in the world's most populous economy by 2006.

Carlyle and Prudential are expected to take active roles in restructuring Pacific Life, which is facing serious pressure in China's increasingly competitive market.

A spokesman from the China Insurance Regulatory Commission declined to comment on whether the deal was in line with government regulations or if it had been approved. Sources from CPLI also would not comment on the deal when contacted on Wednesday.

Earlier this month, the Chinese government lifted geographic and business scope restrictions on foreign insurers in accordance with the nation's World Trade Organization commitments.

## GrapeCity, Infor Partner in Market Auto Solutions

By Ming Xin

GrapeCity Inc., an international software and service provider, last Thursday announced the signing of a strategic partnership agreement with manufacturing and distribution solution provider Infor Global Solutions Inc. to distribute Infor's automotive-focused solutions in the Chinese mainland.

Under the agreement, GrapeCity will use its sales channels to market Infor's solutions and establish a network of trained and certified consultants, resellers and implementers for Infor products.

GrapeCity has operated in China for over 16 years and Infor is a market leader in so-

lutions for the automotive and discrete manufacturing markets in the US and Europe.

The partnership is intended to help automakers in China's exploding market to meet such challenges as shorter product life-cycles, rising industry standards, stricter customer requirements and accelerating time-to-market schedules.

The China Association of Automobile Manufacturers announced earlier this month that vehicle output in China reached 4.67 million units in the first 11 months of 2004. Last year, China surpassed Germany to become the world's third largest automotive market behind the US and Japan.

## Bank of China Delving into Gold Trading

By Sun Yongjian

The Bank of China has received approval from China's banking regulator to launch individual gold trade business, the bank announced last Friday.

Bank spokesman Wang Zhaowen told *Beijing Today* that the bank was prepared to handle different kinds of individual gold transactions. One type was paper transactions, meaning deals done through opening individ-

ual gold accounts, and another material transactions, he said.

"We are the first domestic commercial bank authorized to handle this kind of business," Li Jiefang of the bank's press relations section said on Wednesday.

"The sole rights to handling gold transactions used to be owned by the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank."

## Guangdong Development Bank Poised for Big Bail-out

By Annie Wei

The People's Bank of China and authorities in Guangdong Province are expected to come to the rescue of Guangdong Development Bank, which is struggling under more than 30 billion yuan in non-performing loans, the Beijing-based *Economic Observer* newspaper reported on Monday.

By the end of 2003, the bank had 301 billion yuan in total assets and a total loan volume of 191 billion yuan, 22.8 percent of which were classified as non-performing, it said in its latest annual re-

port. Its low profitability and large amounts of inappropriate loans to shareholders went against government restrictions, the bank admitted.

The Guangdong government was expected to invest heavily to revive the bank, which has borne much of the government's financial burden since the 1990s, the article said.

A source from the People's Bank of China said that if the Guangdong government would take care of 20 billion yuan of the bad loans, the central bank could provide a loan to cover the rest.

## TCL Mobile GM Steps Down

By Sun Yongjian

The general manager of the mobile phone subsidiary of TCL Corp, a Guangdong-based electronics maker, has resigned for health reasons, the company announced on December 19, though some speculate his stepping down is connected to the subsidiary's failing performance.

Wan Mingjian was the head of TCL Mobile Communication Co., which along with its appliance branch is one of the two main sections of TCL Corp.,

the *Beijing Times* said.

A group insider who asked to be unnamed told *Beijing Today* on Monday that Wan's retirement was due to a variety of reasons, including TCL Mobile's plummeting performance. The company's profits this November were down 58 percent year-on-year, marking the seventh straight month of decline, TCL announced last Friday.

Internal conflict between Wan and TCL Chairman Li Dongsheng was also a factor in Wan's move, the source said.

## Pricewaterhouse Coopers Opens Biggest Asia-Pacific Office

By Annie Wei

Pricewaterhouse Coopers (Beijing) is putting the finishing touches on its new office in Beijing Fortune Center along the East Third Ring. Occupying seven floors and around 19,000 square meters, it will be the firm's largest office in the Asia-Pacific region.

Pricewaterhouse Coopers currently operates two offices in the Kerry Centre and World

Trade Center in Beijing's booming Central Business District, but all its local employees will move into the new facility once it is finished.

"Although the two offices are close to each other, it's not a convenient arrangement and some employees don't even have their own desks," senior auditor Caroline Liang told *Beijing Today* on Wednesday.

## Toyota Approved to Offer Financing in China

By Qiu Jiaoning

Toyota Motor Corp and Toyota Financial Services Corp announced last Friday that they had received approval from the China Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC) on December 15 to establish Toyota Motor Finance China Co., a new subsidiary that will mark Toyota's entry into the domestic auto financing sector.

The new China company is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Toyota Financial Services, the holding company for several of Toyota Motor's branch com-

panies. Toyota Motor Finance China will be established in Beijing with 500 million in registered capital and have around 40 employees when it begins operations, which should happen next month.

Toyota Motor Finance China received preliminary approval from the CBRC in late December 2003 and is poised to be very competitive in China's developing auto finance market thanks to the expertise amassed by its parent company in operating branches in 27 countries.

## Korean Oil Giant to Drill in Western China

By Qiu Jiaoning

Korea National Oil Corp (KNOC) said Sunday it would commence commercial oil production in western China in April next year, South Korea's Yonhap news service reported the same day.

The company said it would start drilling in an oil field 250 kilometers southeast of Yinchuan, the capital of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. Though the field only produces 1,000 barrels a day, the quality of its low-sulfur light crude oil has enough value to make produc-

tion worthwhile, KNOC said in a press statement.

The Korean company said it was also planning to develop the Da'an oil field near Bohai Bay in northeastern China, which has more than 200 million barrels of reserves.

"Da'an's oil production is also expected to start next year. KNOC's participation in Chinese oil development is bound to benefit oil supplies in its native South Korea, which is the fourth-largest oil importer in the world," said the corporation's statement.



## Putin: Yukos Auction Complied With Law

Moscow, December 21 (AP) – President Vladimir Putin affirmed the legality of the \$9.3 billion sale of the crown jewel of the Yukos oil empire to a mysterious company, suggesting Tuesday that the subsidiary's new owners could eventually link up with another Russian energy company or even a Chinese conglomerate.

Putin's comments, his first since little-known bidder BaikalFinans-Group snapped up Yukos' Yuganskneftegaz unit in an auction Sunday, appeared to confirm market expectations that the heart of Yukos would ultimately wind up in the hands of state-controlled natural gas giant Gazprom.

Acquiring Yuganskneftegaz – which pumps about 11 percent of Russia's oil – would make Gazprom an international oil-and-gas energy titan.

“As far as I understand and am informed the auction was conducted in strict accordance with Russian legislation,” Putin said at a news conference in Schleswig, Germany. “I expect that all further actions will take place in accordance with the law.”

Late Tuesday, Gazprom made a surprise announcement that it had sold off its newly created oil company Gazpromneft – a holding company that had been widely



Front pages of Russian newspapers with articles about Baikalfinansgroup. Russian state oil company Rosneft has become the new owner of Yuganskneftegaz by buying 100 percent of the shares of previously unknown Baikalfinans-group, which in turn had purchased the main subsidiary of Yukos in an auction. (AFP)

expected to buy Yuganskneftegaz.

Putin also suggested that China – a major buyer of Yukos' oil – could play some role in Yuganskneftegaz under its new owner.

“We can't rule out that any Chinese energy company might participate in these assets that have been sold off at the auction,” he said.

### Russian State Firm Buys Yukos Unit

Moscow, December 22 (Reuters) – Russian state oil firm Rosneft has bought Yukos' core unit, effectively nationalizing 11 percent of the country's crude output and dealing a heavy blow to Yukos' attempts to halt its own dismemberment.

A Rosneft official, who declined to be identified, said on Thursday his firm had bought 100 percent of Baikal Finance Group, shock winner of Sunday's auction of core Yukos unit Yuganskneftegaz.

“I can confirm we have bought it all,” he said. But he gave no figure for the deal.

#### Local Report:

China has to cope with new rivals in the negotiations with Russia on the construction of the Sino-Russia Far Eastern Oil Transmission Pipeline, negotiations which have been going on for ten years so far without yet yielding anything. China may yet encounter a greater challenge.

It is conspicuous that the new rivals are much stronger than Yukos, which has a background of private capital, because they represent Russian government-backed state-owned oil.

An experienced specialist on the

The Yugansk auction was the culmination of a Kremlin campaign to crush Yukos' politically ambitious principal owner, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, and seize control of strategic sectors of the economy sold off in chaotic privatization of the 1990s.

The Rosneft deal has underscored the Kremlin's determination to prevail and claim Yukos' prize asset for itself.

It will make Rosneft one of Russia's biggest oil firms with production of 1.45 million barrels per day, almost as much as OPEC member Libya.

issue of Sino-Russia strategy with the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) gave a comment to Beijing Morning Post that China should be more pragmatic in the negotiation and should do more research into Putin's strategy; basically start from scratch.

But a meeting between Chen Geng, the general manager of China National Petroleum Corporation, and the leaders of the Russia Gas Industry Holding Corp. on the eve of the Yukos auction was quite optimistic, according to a Russian official statement after the meeting.

– Beijing Morning Post, December 22 (Sun Yongjian)



## Microsoft's European Court Loss Unlikely to Impact Finances

Washington (AFP) – Microsoft received a bloody nose in its legal battle to suspend European sanctions, but the financial hit is likely no more than a glancing blow, analysts said.

The European Court of First Instance rejected the software titan's plea for a suspension of European Commission punitive measures until its full appeal – likely to take 18 months – was complete.

As a result, the fine levied by Brussels in March of 497 million euros (665 million dollars) stands.

Microsoft also must immediately offer consumers in Europe a stripped down version of Windows without the built-in Media Player music and video software, the court said. It also was forced to reveal secret software code to let competitors tailor their programs more easily to the operating system.

## EU Cuts 2005 Fish Quotas

Brussels, December 21 (Reuters) – The EU ordered minor cuts in 2005 national fish catches Wednesday, rejecting proposals to shut fishing grounds in favor of more limits on the time trawlers can hunt for depleted species like cod.

In a bid to secure a deal that would give chronically low stocks a chance to recover, the European Commission had wanted to ban cod fishing in several areas, mainly in the North Sea.

Faced with bitter opposition from Britain and France, the Commission backed down from a plan to turn stretches of water

into no-go zones – opting instead to impose further curbs on permitted fishing times and cut national catch allowances.

Lithuania was the only EU state to reject the compromise deal, while Greece abstained.

Scientists have repeatedly warned fish numbers are so dangerously low in some areas that the only solution is to ban fishing. Cod, hake and sole could die out, they say.

The Commission has usually rejected a ban for fear of wrecking communities dependent on fishing for a livelihood.

## Fannie Mae Execs Forced Out

Washington, December 22 (AP) – Fannie Mae, America's second largest financial institution, forced out two top executives as it struggles to deal with an accounting scandal which will likely force it to wipe out \$9 billion in profits over the past four years.

Fannie Mae chief executive Franklin Raines and J. Timothy Howard, the company's chief financial officer, stepped down Tuesday after lengthy negotiations between the Fannie Mae board and the company's chief government regulator, the Office of Federal Housing

Enterprise Oversight.

Industry and congressional sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Fannie Mae's board had been pressured by OFHEO during tense negotiations over the past several days to demand the resignations of both Raines and Howard.

OFHEO Director Armando Falcon Jr. said in a statement that his agency had determined that Fannie Mae, the biggest player in the nation's \$8 trillion mortgage market, had been left “significantly undercapitalized” because of its accounting problems.

## Pfizer Joins Drug Troubles

December 21 (USA Today) – Drug investors may be wishing they could pop two pills and feel better in the morning.

The latest headache hit last week when Pfizer joined the rash of drug companies announcing problems with their products.

Pfizer's shares cratered \$3.23 to \$25.75 Friday, erasing \$24.3 billion in market value, after Pfizer said its inflammation-fighting Celebrex may cause heart prob-

lems if taken frequently at high doses.

Investors were particularly sensitive to the news, as rival Merck faces a swell of lawsuits after its withdrawal of a similar drug, Vioxx. Merck shares have slumped 30% since it announced the recall on September 30.

Pfizer says it has no plans to pull Celebrex. Securities analysts reiterated other studies showing Celebrex to be safe at normal dosages.

## Things Not to Buy for Christmas

Geneva, December 21 (AFP) – Luxury gifts such as turtle shell hair clips, ivory bracelets or even a pet tiger should be crossed off Christmas lists to give the environment some festive cheer, the conservation group WWF said.

It highlighted 10 items that should either be left on the shelf or purchased with caution, urging present-buyers to check the label of environmentally sensitive products to ensure, for example, that the reptile behind a pair of snake skin cowboy boots was bred on a farm rather than in the wild.

“It's about being aware

of what you buy, and the impact it can have on species and the environment,” said Dr Susan Lieberman, the director of WWF's global species programme.

Among the items that Father Christmas should avoid this year are any tiger products because, with only 5,000 of the striped cats left in the wild, all international trade of tiger goods is illegal.

“Owning a tiger as a pet, as well as tiger skin rugs and coats is gaining kudos in some elite circles,” WWF noted in a statement released from its headquarters in Switzerland.



Police put on show notes like the ones stolen in a multimillion pound robbery this week. More than 22 million pounds sterling (31.48 million euros, US\$42.1 million) was taken in Monday's dramatic robbery at the Northern Bank in Belfast, the Police Service of Northern Ireland said. Photo by Imaginechina

## EU Sets Date for Talks on Turkish Entry

Brussels, December 17 (The Independent) – After more than 40 years of waiting, Turkey was yesterday invited to start European Union membership talks next year, after European leaders agreed to impose a series of tough conditions on the negotiations.

At a summit in Brussels, EU leaders decided that detailed membership talks with Ankara can begin on 3 October next year under the chairmanship of the UK, which takes over the EU presidency in July.

But officials were still awaiting an official reaction from Ankara. Still unresolved was a blockade over

Turkey's relations with Cyprus, which it does not recognize but which entered the EU in May.

The most difficult issue to resolve remains Cyprus, which joined the EU as a divided island in May and has been pressing Turkey to grant it formal recognition.

#### Analyst's Take:

Compared with West European counterparts, Central and Eastern European states and Turkey are relatively underdeveloped. Some of them possess a per capita GDP less than a quarter of the average in the rest of the EU. But from the

political and economic points of view, both sides, the developed and underdeveloped, will gain more than lose for the latter's entry.

Of the more positive factors, first, an extended EU will become the globe's largest single market and economy, within which free circulation of personnel, commodities, capital and labor together guarantee the rational distribution of resources.

Second, the new EU's amount of direct investment abroad will make up 46% of the world total, while it will absorb 24% of the globe's FDI (Foreign Direct Invest-

ment). This will boost the economic development of both the old and new member states.

Third, the EU's position will be strengthened in negotiations within the framework of international economic and trade organizations, especially regarding the implementation of common commercial policy.

– Liu Wenxiu, European Union Expert, director of the Department of Subject-based English, School of International Studies, Renmin University

(Nie Zhiyang)

## US Trade Deficit Bulges to Record

Washington, December 16 (AFP) – The United States posted a record external deficit for the third quarter of 2004, exacerbating fears of a brutal dollar plunge.

The deficit in the current account – trade in goods and services, investment returns and one-way financial transfers – expanded to \$164.7 billion from \$164.4 billion in the second quarter, the Commerce Department said. The deficit was unprecedented, but narrower than the \$171 billion hole predicted by Wall Street economists.

Wachovia global economist Jay Bryson was more sanguine, noting that foreign direct investment in the US rose to a record \$53 billion dollars in the third quarter. In 2001-2002 foreign direct investment (FDI) had collapsed as global growth slowed, Bryson said.

“As long as global growth remains solid next year, which is our expectation, FDI should remain strong.”

#### Local Report:

In the third quarter of 2004, foreign direct investment (FDI) in

the US took a turn for the better, changing from net outflow to net inflow. Continued rising of American interest rates and devaluation of the US dollar are the leading cause of the situation, along with the increase of EU and other European countries' FDI in the US.

“The weak dollar policy has partly accomplished its objective,” said Sun Lijian, associate professor of the International Finance Department at Fudan University.

The euro peaked at \$1.3470 on December 16, after reaching a

series of new highs against the dollar. The weaker currency isn't expected to rebound soon and that means it will likely keep eating into European exports, growth and jobs through next year.

But Zhong Wei, director of the Finance Research Center at Beijing Normal University, said that it is not practical for the US to hope that the devaluation of the dollar can improve the situation of serious financial and trade deficits.

– China Business News, December 20 (Qiu Jiaoning)



By Chu Meng

The old Xiushui Market, better known as Silk Street, will be closed and torn down on January 10 next year to make way for the new and improved enclosed Xiushui Street complex. Besides a roof, the new sales center should offer average rents about 50 percent below the street's traditional stalls, a representative of the economic administration center of the Jianguomenwai sub-district office, the local government body in charge of the Silk Street area, said in a CCTV report on Sunday.

On Monday, Beijing Xinya Shenghong Real Estate Co., developer of the new Xiushui Street market, posted a bulletin at the old market's entrance advising vendors the new building was almost completed and would offer them many benefits. Those that decided to move in would not only pay around half their current average monthly rent, they would not be charged 50,000 yuan initial start-up fees or property management fees in their first year of rental and could get guarantees for necessary bank loans from the market, the notice said.

The economic administration center announced the timetable for the demolition of the venerable street market in another bulletin posted on Monday. That notice told vendors to run sales to liquidate stock before January 5, after which the market would get a thorough, five-day clean-up

## End of an Era

Xiushui Market finally marked for destruction in January



Not even Wednesday's snow could keep shoppers from seeking some final bargains before Silk Street closes for good. CCTV photo

and finally be closed for business by January 11.

Though it has long been a major draw for tourists, the old Silk Street market ended up being closed because it did not have

proper local land use certification and posed serious fire and safety hazards. Reports have swirled though the local media since June 19 that the market was going to be razed and its many small

stalls put under the roof of Xiushui Street, though many vendors resisted the move and the process ended up taking longer than expected. But like all things, Silk Street too shall pass.

## Plot Thickens in Jianlibao Jam

By Sun Yongjian

Though the two sides in the ongoing ownership battle over Chinese beverage bottler Jianlibao came forward with their first public statements this week, the dispute appears no closer to resolution.

The fight was sparked when the government of Sanshui district in Guangdong Province forcefully took control of Jianlibao Group on December 7 despite the fact Beijing-based Huizhong Tiansheng and another local company had purchased a 91.1 percent stake in China's top domestic beverage maker on November 16.

Huizhong Tiansheng Chairman Li Zhida and former Jianlibao shareholders Ye Honghan and Zhu Weisha issued a statement on Thursday condemning the actions of Sanshui leader Song Deping and saying his move did not represent the will of the whole district government, which holds an 8.9 percent stake in the company.

Zhang Hai, the former chairman of Jianlibao who oversaw the November purchase, was noticeably absent from the group that issued the statement. It was a direct response to a statement issued on Tuesday by Song, the first time he had gone public on the government's questionable takeover.

"We demand the Sanshui government withdraw from Jianlibao immediately... And we retain the right to sue Song and other officials involved in the matter," the Thursday statement said.

When Song spoke to the *Beijing News* on Tuesday, he said, "How can Huizhong Tiansheng claim to be the largest shareholder in Jianlibao? The shares have not yet been transferred to their account."

*Beijing Today* has repeatedly contacted Song, but the Sanshui leader has not answered his telephone.

Since early 2004, once-mighty Jianlibao Group has become increasingly mired in a fiscal crisis, with production nearly stopped, employees going unpaid for nearly two months, sales plummeting and debts spiraling. A report in the Guangzhou-based *21st Century Business Herald* said last Wednesday that an unnamed Jianlibao insider had accused former chairman Zhang Hai of embezzling several hundred million yuan and plunging the company into the red.

Zhang publicly proclaimed his innocence last Saturday, but a report in the *Herald* the day before said the former chairman's home was under police surveillance.

Qu Bing, public relations manager of Huizhong Tiansheng declined to offer any response to Song's comments when contacted by *Beijing Today* on Wednesday, but did say her company was preparing to file suit against the Sanshui government.

After Song and the Sanshui authorities took over, Jianlibao Group last Thursday announced the dismissal of 29 former executives, including the financial supervisor, purchasing supervisor and chief legal representative, most of whom worked for the company before the Huizhong Tiansheng-led purchase. Jianlibao's new board of directors, formed after the buy-out, was disbanded by the Sanshui government on December 7.

## Masses Line Up for Yearly Park Passes

By Liu Zhaoxi

Wednesday's heavy snow and fierce winds did not stop scores of people from clustering around a sales center at Yuyuantan Park, along the south end of the West Third Ring Road, to purchase yearly local park passes for 2005.

The big turnout was typical for the week, in which annual passes for unlimited access to 12 local recreation areas next year went on sale at parks around the city.

When ticket windows at several parks opened for business on Monday morning, hundreds of people, mostly seniors, had already formed lines to get the coveted passes. Local authorities expect a record 100,000 passes to be sold for 2005, *Beijing Youth Daily* reported on Tuesday.

"The prospect of raising admission prices at some parks could be the stimulus for this rush. Some people who did not buy yearly passes in the past came out to get them this year," Guan Shixian, a retiree who rode his bicycle through the snow to get an annual entry pass at Yuyuantan Park told *Beijing Today* on Wednesday.

In late November, the Beijing government held a public hearing on a proposal to steeply increase admission prices at World Heritage Sites in the city including the Summer Palace and the Temple of Heaven.

However, another pass-buyer, Wu Zhao,



Retirees made up the majority of people who queued outside the Temple of Heaven this week to get yearly park passes, which sell for 50 to 200 yuan.

Photo by Kuang Linhua

said the timing of the sales rush had nothing to do with the possible price hikes. Wu attributed the pass press to the growing number of retirees in the capital.

Wu speculated the large turnout was a sign of the aging of the city's population.

The passes, which cost 50 yuan for people over 60, 100 yuan for retirees and 200 yuan for the general public, offer access to such famous sites as the Summer Palace, Temple of Heaven, Beijing Zoo and Fragrant Hills as well as parks like Yuyuantan. No age or residence restrictions apply to the 200-yuan passes, making them great deals for all regular park-goers.

Sales are scheduled to run until January 20, 2005.

## Paying to Ring in 2005

By Wang Fang

The Administration Office of Jietai Temple in Mentougou District, Beijing announced on Tuesday that the Longquan Hotel won the bidding for the first ring of the temple's bell on New Year's Day.

The hotel won the privilege with a bid of 50,000 yuan at last Saturday's auction, the first time a local temple has sold the first bell toll of a year, the *Beijing Times* reported on Wednesday.

"We'll randomly choose a guest who checks in on December 31 to actually ring the bell," a Longquan Hotel employee told the *Beijing Messenger* newspaper.

The 108 tones of the Buddhist temple's bell are considered "rings of good faith" and have developed a reputation in other domestic temples like the Dabai Temple in Tianjin and Hanshan Temple in Jiangsu Province.

## Former Power Official To Face the Music

By Liu Zhaoxi

The former head of the Beijing Power Supply Bureau will stand before court to face charges of abuse of power and financial mismanagement, as the Xicheng District procuratorate accepted the case on Tuesday and is expected to start its prosecution within two months, the *Beijing Times* said on Wednesday.

Zhao Shuangju, 64, served as the head of the bureau for 13 years until 1999. Between 1994 to 1996, without authorization, he provided loan guarantees worth more than 1 billion yuan to a local company that later went bankrupt, resulting in about 500 million of debts to the government organi-

zation, the National Audit Office later uncovered. Zhao was arrested on charges of malfeasance in September.

Investigators took more than three months assembling evidence for the case against Zhao. When the case goes to court, Zhao will be the first official uncovered in the so-called "auditing storm" of 2004 to stand trial.

Last June, the National Audit Office said financial foul play was rife nationwide in a report to the National People's Congress. Shortly after, the office launched a national campaign to investigate for signs of mismanagement and embezzlement at government agencies.

## Donation Drive Revives Local AB Blood Stores

By Liu Zhaoxi

After several days of heavy donations, the shortage of type AB blood in Beijing's blood banks has started to ease, Ge Jinglan, an official from the Beijing Red Cross told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday.

Beijing residents started giving blood last Friday, a day after the blood center announced the critical shortage of AB blood stores through the local media. Thousands turned out at blood donation vehicles around the city to offer help.

"There were so many people coming in we did not even have time to break for lunch," Bai Jie, captain of the blood collecting vehicle at Xidan, a commercial center in downtown Beijing, said on Monday.

Donation fever continued this week. Even as the sun went down and temperatures dropped late Monday afternoon, Bai's vehicle was still full of blood donors. Bai said she

and her colleagues had collected 120 bags of blood that day, twice the normal amount.

A young local woman who said her surname was Chen told *Beijing Today* she went to the vehicle to give an intravenous donation after hearing about the AB shortage on television the day before. "I don't see this as a contribution, everyone needs help sometime," Chen said. "If my donation can save lives, it is simply a good thing to do."

Ge Jinglan said type B blood was also needed and called on people to continue the donation drive. Of course, donations of all types of blood were more than welcome to back up local stores, she added.

Since last Friday, blood collecting vehicles at Xidan and Wangfujing have extended their operating hours to 8 pm and the Red Cross' center has stayed open until 9 pm to take care of all prospective donors.



"This photo is a recording of the most meaningful Christmas gift I have ever given" - a Beijing blood donor

Photo by Jia Ting

## Santa Spreads Good Cheer, Photos

By Liu An

Santa Claus paid some unusual visits to several local spots on Wednesday, snapping photographs and printing out high-quality prints on the spot. The Christmas-theme promotion was part of a campaign to introduce Beijingers to Hewlett-Packard's new easy-carry photo printer capable of printing both pictures and text.

St. Nick brought his photographic Christmas cheer to such places as the

Beijing's Women Volleyball Training Center, Beijing Second Deaf-mute School, the Dongcheng District Marriage Registration Center and a retirement home in Dongcheng. He even stopped to take pictures of volunteers giving blood at a local donation center and presented them with quick prints as Christmas gifts.

"This photo is a recording of the most meaningful Christmas gift I have ever given," one donor said.

## Physicist, Young Former Student Form Barrier-Breaking Bond

By Zhou Ying

Chinese-American Nobel laureate physicist Yang Zhenning popped the question to a Chinese woman last week and the happy couple hope to tie the knot early next year. What has put the seemingly unremarkable events into the headlines of newspapers nationwide is the age difference between the two - Yang is 82 and his bride-to-be 28.

However, nationality, not age, has proven to be a problem. An official from the Beijing Civil Affairs Bureau told *Beijing Youth Daily* on Monday that Yang was not eligible to get a marriage certificate in the capital, as the couple had initially wished. "Since he is of American nationality, they should get their certificate from the local bureau in the fiancée's hometown," the unnamed official said.

Yang proposed to Weng Fan, whom the physicist has called a "blessing from God", over the telephone and the couple decided to get married in January, Beijing's *Mirror* newspaper reported. They have yet to formally celebrate their engagement because they are currently separated, with Yang teaching at Tsinghua University in Beijing and Weng in Guangzhou working to complete a master's degree.

The two first met at Shantou University in Guangdong Province in 1995, when Yang attended an international physics seminar accompanied by his late wife



Yang Zhenning and Weng Fan

Chih Li Tu, daughter of deceased Guomindang General Du Yuming.

Weng, a freshman at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies at the time, was working as an interpreter at the seminar and was assigned to receive and assist the Yangs during the event. Yang later said he was deeply impressed by Weng's considerate nature and excellent English.

The two reestablished contact this February and quickly fell in love.

It will be the second marriage for both. Yang became a widower last year, while Weng married shortly after she graduated college and quickly got divorced.

Yang won the 1957 Nobel Prize for physics in conjunction with Lee Tsung-dao for their investigations of "parity laws", which led to important discoveries about elementary particles.

Weng's 63-year-old father Weng Yunguang told the *Beijing Times* last Friday that he respected his daughter's choice and he and his wife would attend the wedding ceremony in Beijing.



# Who Needs Real Estate Agents Anyway?

By Liu Zhaoxi

**Y**u Linggang, a part-time engineer for the Lenovo Group, was so busy outlining his plans to *Beijing Today* that his McDonald's meal was going cold. But then, Yu is clearly a man with a mission. He wants to establish a residential building from scratch without any input from real estate developers.

Yu, 31, may set a record in Beijing as the first individual to organize a fund pool to build a residential tower just for the project participants. First announcing his plan on the Internet at the end of 2003, Yu has just started to recruit partners and by Thursday, more than 300 people had filled out registration forms. The financial qualification to get into the program will be a personal deposit of no less than 150,000 yuan, with bank proof.

According to Yu's plan, two to three hundred people will pool together collective investment into their personal fund, set up a company, get a piece of land through auction, hire qualified constructors to build an apartment block, and finally allot the apartments within their own circle. Yu called this construction and distribution of homes a not-for-profit scheme. In other words, in this cooperative building project, as Yu calls it, participants will take care of everything related to the building by themselves, making their own decisions while sharing the risks as well as benefits, without the involvement of real estate developers. He is going to establish the company sometime early next year and is looking at a piece of land near the north-east section of the Fourth Ring Road.

The idea may sound wonderful to those who are terrified by rocketing house prices and longing for more power over their property, but it is certainly not an easy task to make this dream come true.

**Yu Linggang**, initiator of the cooperative building project: **the potential benefits are huge**

The foremost benefit of the project is that it makes the property cheap. Because the project is non-profit, participants can purchase the apartment at cost. Theoretically, they will only pay about half of the average current market price to own the property. Plus, the project includes developing ground-floor shops and the income earned will be refunded to property owners per month.

So far the ownership of real estate projects has always been in the hands of the developers, therefore they control the realty management and other benefits brought by the project such as the leasing income of the ground-floor shops. Our project can allow the property owners to reclaim the project ownership and take control of the realty management and benefits.

The core concept of the project is property-owner-funding. The potential owners will provide 40% of the funding for the project, and get individual loans from the bank



Yu explained his plan at sohu.com last Friday

(From sohu.com)

to fund the remaining 60%. We will use a new financial system, in which each participant will set up an account at an assigned bank and the money in the account can only be used for the project. All the payments for the project will be done through bank transfer. Such transfers occur once a month, and there are 20 days before the transfer for the participants to review the payment proposal so that they all agree how much money to pay this month and to whom. And then, they should go to the bank no later than the sixth day of each month to confirm the transfer and the bank can only use the money under the authorization of the account owner. This way, it is guaranteed that the money is used only for the project and the bank faces lower risks.

Whether the plan succeeds or not, at least I can let people realize that ground-floor shops are worth a lot of money.

**Meng Xiansheng**, lawyer at Beijing Ren He law firm: **Yu's plan is short on practical details**

Yu's idea is valuable, taking into

account the current problems within the real estate market. His approach of getting the funds first and then constructing the building is not exactly common in big cities. But I think it would be better for him to set up a non-profit organization, instead of a company to run the project. According to Chinese company law, a company is defined as an institution aiming at making profits. Yu wants to start a not-for-profit project using a profit-making organization, and the two won't match with each other.

So far, Yu has provided a lot of conceptual proposals but I haven't seen many detailed clauses at the level of actual practice, such as executable documents for every step in the process. Many people are paying attention to his plan, but when it comes to the point to ask people to hand out their money, a detailed and sound system is required.

A complete system for this project, in my opinion, should address at least five issues: collecting the fund, establishing a body to run the project, using the fund, managing the construction (including

the quality and cost), and allocating as well as managing the established property. Among these issues, using the fund and guaranteeing the safety of the fund is crucial. There must be a fire wall between the managing body and the collected fund. I think Yu should consider the trust system, as it could guarantee the independence and therefore the safety of the entrusted fund or property. If Yu still takes the approach of collecting funds first and then getting bank loans, he is still in the old circle and may not be able to compete with the developers.

**Wang Lina**, researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences: **such an attempt should be encouraged**

This kind of self-funded property scheme should be encouraged. Because when people build property by themselves and not for making profit, they will reduce the cost to its lowest. But it could be difficult for this practice to be popularized. To build a house on their own, people have to endeavor from the beginning to the end, and all the input of time and energy are kind of a burden. Maybe it will be more economical to just buy houses from the developers. Besides, such a corporation requires trust and the current credit level in society is a thorny issue.

**Mr. Yang**, official at the China Real Estate Association: **the cost might end up being higher**

This project may not be cheaper because they are not professional developers and they could end up paying more on unnecessary expenses.

**Zhang Yusheng**, real estate developer: **disputes are hard to avoid**

The biggest risk for such a cooperation is the difficulty of satisfying everyone's ideas for the final product. For instance, different floors of a building ought to be of different prices. Facing such a large group of participants, who will decide the prices of different floors? There will be many disputes. After all, this project is still a real estate development. What they can save are the costs of marketing and the profit margin. Other costs, like the cost of land, taxes and fees, all have to be paid. (from sohu.com)

**Anonymous official at Beijing Construction Committee**: **the government doesn't have much to say at this stage**

Yu Linggang is going to set up a company and this is OK so long as he follows laws and regulations. Law and policies will determine what his company can and can not do. There is nothing so special about his activity. A long time ago, people built their own houses. Later, social division of labor occurred and resulted in the current format of real estate developers. This should be the mainstream. It is OK for people to establish a building on their own, but it is a complicated process and it is hard to tell whether they will succeed.

## Commentary

## Incompetent Government Officials Challenged

By Shida Zhu

Zhejiang Province, one of the major engines for economic growth in China, has recently stipulated regulations that look into the responsibilities of those whose behavior has affected the efficiency of government. The common people call them rules to challenge the incompetence of mediocre government officials.

This is the first effort of this kind in China. Observers here believe that this will usher in a nation-wide effort to cope with those government officials who are mediocre and incompetent, with a view to upgrading government efficiency.

According to the rules, if there are violations of the existing laws and decrees, public policies and the working system or failures to fulfill duties, resulting in a hindrance to the objects of governance and service by the staff of administrative, judiciary and prosecuting institutions, those held responsible will be investigated in terms of efficiency, discipline and legality. This involves criticism and verbal warning, and, if the cases are serious, sacking.

The life of these mediocre officials, as a popular saying goes, is "a cup of tea, a cigarette, a newspaper perused for half a day." Though they might not be responsible for any major production accidents or have any bad records of bribery or embezzlement of public money, they are not only good for nothing, but also serve as obstacles in the way of China improving its governance.

Since February this year, a total of 2,390 such officials have been reprimanded or administratively punished and 94 of them have been sacked. Some were punished because of surfing the Internet in ways irrelevant to work, playing video games, buying or selling stocks during working time and others because of absence from work without any reason.

Zhejiang has made a step forward, not only tackling the corrupt but now taking on the incompetent as well. This is completely in conformity with the need to change the role of the government and the wishes of the people.

The practice of the rules will help institute a mechanism in which the bad government staff will be eliminated and the best will survive in a competitive environment.

Civil servants who shoulder major responsibilities of management and organization in the nation's political, economic, social and cultural life, should be the quintessence of the nation's talents. Civil service should be one of the hottest jobs people strive for. The applicants for the positions of central government departments have hit a record high this year. The ratio between the number of applicants and the planned recruitment is 37.3:7. In 26 departments, the ratio amounts to 100:1 and the highest ratio is 322.8:1. According to some surveys, half of university graduates wish to take the examinations for civil servants. The competition for the entry is intense. So is it inside the government institutions. The deputy division chiefs and above account for 8% of the total government staff and 92% are the section chiefs and lower. If the mediocre officials are not to be eliminated to make way for new talent and competition, what is the hope for the majority of the civil servants?

Another question relevant to this is the pay of government staff. Over a long period of time, government staff have received fairly low pay. This was not conducive to attracting talented employees to government work or for the stability and optimization of government employment. Some people recognize that government staff get a fairly low salary and in the meantime oppose raising their salaries on the grounds that there are too many incompetent people, undeserving of a raise. Now, the Zhejiang practice has tackled this problem, proceeding to prune away the incompetents and let the properly qualified staff get what they deserve.

That this system to challenge mediocre government officials was born in Zhejiang is not surprising. In the last few years, the province has been one of the frontrunners in economic growth and social development in China. In particular, the development of the burgeoning private and collectively-owned economy has caught national attention. With such a level of economic, social and cultural development, it is all the more natural to demand a clean, fair and efficient government.

Since the set-up of the new collective central leadership, Chinese leaders have all attached great importance to the change of the government role and the innovation of public service. While doing a good job of economic regulation and market control, the government will set great store by its role of social management and public service. Public service means providing public goods and services covering the improvement of public installations, social employment, social security and scientific, educational, and health endeavors. They will provide guarantees and help create conditions for the better participation by the people in social, economic, political and cultural activities. This gigantic work needs higher and better executive ability and quality in government staff. This practice in Zhejiang will undoubtedly breathe fresh air into Chinese politics and Chinese society in general.

## Soundbites

"Our idol, our president is dead. And his victory was stolen. That is why we are grieving with a heavy heart."

**Lani Beato**, a 42-year-old housewife in Manila, Philippines, was one of the tens of thousands of Filipinos who filled the streets of Manila Wednesday for the funeral of Fernando Poe Jr., the actor-turned-presidential candidate who refused to concede to the May election. Poe's followers vented their anger at President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, who defeated Poe in a tight race that the actor and his supporters charged was fraudulent.

"We've enjoyed it from the first day until yesterday. Now she's one

of the best companions I've ever encountered or ever will. We have incredible communication."

Spanish movie star **Penelope Cruz** said of Mexican actress Salma Hayek. The two hit it off from day one during the 14-week filming of *Bandidas*, a Western about two female outlaws set in 19th Century Mexico. The film's producer, French filmmaker Luc Besson, testified to the close relationship between the two starring actresses, noting that the friendship verged upon the conspiratorial at a press conference in Mexico City on Saturday.

"If I thought those policies would change by changing the secretary of defense, I'd be all for it. But I

don't see that that is the ticket to policy change."

The US Armed Services Committee's ranking Democrat **Carl Levin** of Michigan on Monday, responding to the suggestion of change of civilian leadership at the Pentagon, given Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's mistakes in Iraq.

"Why do we soldiers have to dig through local landfills for pieces of scrap metal and compromised ballistic glass to up-armor our vehicles?"

**Thomas Wilson**, of the Tennessee National Guard, U.S., to Defense Secretary Donal Rumsfeld, in a townhall meeting with soldiers at Camp Buehring in Kuwait.

"I don't know why the terrorists haven't poisoned our food supply yet,

because it's so easy to do."

**Tommy Thompson**, US Health and Human Services Secretary, in a warning about potential bioterror attacks that prompted the Food and Drug Administration to adopt new guidelines against food contamination.

"You can be released, you can be killed. You can wait for two weeks, you can wait for six months, you can wait for two years, so, you know, there is pressure. ... It's a very tough situation when you are surrounded by people with guns, masks."

**Georges Malbrunot**, one of the two French journalists taken hostage by an Iraqi insurgency group in August and released Tuesday, received a joyful greeting as he arrived in Paris on Wednesday.

(Edited by Lene Chau)



### Top Urban Domestic Concerns

#### 2000

environmental protection (49.2%)  
unemployment (43.7%)  
youth education (34.7%)  
social security (33.4%)  
corruption (29.0%)  
economic growth (20.2%)  
pensions reform (19.3%)

#### 2001

unemployment (45.2%)  
environmental protection (41.3%)  
social welfare (32.6%)  
economic growth (25.8%)  
housing reform (25.8%)  
corruption (15.4%)  
social security (15.2%)

#### 2002

unemployment (45.2%)  
social welfare (34.5%)  
environmental protection (29.5%)  
medical insurance reform (26.3%)  
economic growth (25.7%)  
housing reform (23.1%)  
youth education (20.6%)

#### 2003

unemployment (53.5%)  
social welfare (32.1%)  
housing reform (31.6%)  
environmental protection (24.3%)  
economic growth (22.7%)  
medical insurance reform (21.4%)  
corruption (20.7%)

#### 2004

unemployment (39.7%)  
economic growth (32.0%)  
housing reform (31.0%)  
social welfare (30.2%)  
environmental protection (29.6%)  
youth education (19.0%)  
social security (18.3%)



# The Big Blue One

Last week, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences published A Blue Book of China's Society-Analysis and Forecast on China's Social Development (2005). This is the 13th "blue book" analyzing the so-

cial situation of China.

The book involved 27 articles by approved professors from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Horizon Social Survey Corporation, the Development Research Center and State Council.

## What Keeps You Awake at Nights?

By Dong Nan

What was the number one worry of city residents in 2004? According to a survey conducted by Horizon Social Survey Corporation, it's still the same as it has been since 2001: unemployment.

But on the plus side, the percentage of job worriers fell 13.2% from 2003's 52.9% to this year's 39.7%.

The hot newcomer to the worry charts was the Chinese economy's over-rapid growth of investment. As the central government tried to cool things off, 32% of people worried about this issue, much higher than 22.7% in 2003.

Rising up one place to third in the worry charts was housing, from 31.6% in 2003 to 31% in

2004. Social welfare is supposed to address unemployment. Social welfare has dropped slightly to become the fourth-greatest concern (30.2%) from last year's second-greatest (32.1%).

The percentage of people who care about crime increased from 2003's 13.6% to 18.3% this year, according to a report of Ministry of Public Security. From January to June 2004, there were 2.1 million reported criminal cases in China, up 9.9% on the same six months of 2003.

#### Survey information:

The survey was conducted by Horizon Social Survey Corporation, a Beijing-based company and based on 3,000 questionnaires in 10 Chinese cities.

## Shiny Happy People

By Dong Nan

Chinese people are getting happier and happier, according to the "Report on Quality of Life in 2004" conducted by Horizon Social Survey Corporation.

The survey offered ratings from five to one: "Very satisfied" with life, "satisfied", "just so-so", "dissatisfied" and "very dissatisfied." Chinese people averaged 3.5 points in 2005, up from 3.43 points in 2003; and 66.9% of people found their lives "very satisfying", or "satisfying", with 20.5% "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied." The rest felt life was just so-so.

About 77% of respondents thought they were "very happy" or "happy", and 8.8% thought that they were "unhappy" or "very unhappy." In cities, 76.5% of respondents thought they were very happy or plain happy and 77.5%

felt the same in the countryside. About 9.9% felt "unhappy" or "very unhappy" in the cities and 8.2% in rural areas. In other words, rural people felt happier than city people.

In cities, the happiest group was people 16-25 years old (85% felt very happy or happy, and 5.2% felt unhappy or very unhappy). For people in 36-45, 71% felt very happy or happy, and 13.6% unhappy or very unhappy. For people 46-55, 71.8% felt very happy or happy, and 13% felt unhappy or very unhappy.

The happiest group in rural areas was also people 16-25 (85.6% and 7.7%); and the unhappiest group was 56-60 year-olds (71.7% and 11.5%).

In cities, students had the happiest profession (89.7% very happy or happy, 3.2% unhappy or very unhappy), followed by

middle/high-ranking managers (89% and 3.8%) and office clerks (84% and 4.5%). Laid-off workers and the unemployed were unhappiest (55.1% and 22.1%).

The survey found 51.1% of respondents said the best words to describe their feeling towards life was "peaceful and satisfying".

As to future hopes, 72.5% of respondents held an optimistic opinion (74.5% in cities and 71.4% in rural areas) and 7% felt pessimistic (7.3% in cities and 6.9% in rural areas).

#### Survey information:

The survey was conducted by Horizon Social Survey Corporation, a Beijing-based company and based on 3,859 questionnaires in seven cities (Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Wuhan, Shenyang, Xi'an and Chengdu), seven towns in Zhejiang, Fujian, Liaoning, Hebei, Hunan, Sichuan and Shaanxi provinces and seven villages in the above-mentioned provinces.

## More Fellas than Females

By Wang Fang

Good news for women: In the future, there will be 121 Chinese men for every 100 Chinese women, according to a survey by the Population and Labor Economics Institute of China Social Sciences Academy.

The 2000 census found among children aged 0-4, the male-to-female ratio was 119, and that ratio just keeps rising. In 2003, it was 121.22. For 5-9 year-olds it was 119.66. For 10-14 year-olds the figure was 111.69. For 15-19 year-olds, it was 110.61.

When these babies enter legal marriage age, this will create considerable new pressures for Chinese society. This challenge is beginning to press children aged 15-19.

The survey suggests it will take at least 10 years' hard work to reduce the improper gender ratio of newborn babies by cracking down on illegal prenatal sex screening and protecting female babies.

#### Survey information:

The survey is based on the 2004 Chinese Statistics Yearbook, page 104.



There are almost 20 million extra boys in China, according to the Population and Labor Economics Institute of China Social Sciences Academy.



The average income of a farmer is expected to be 2,920 yuan per year, according to the Sociology Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

## Private Entrepreneurs Fly the Flag

By Wang Fang

The Blue Book found private entrepreneurs are the fastest-growing group in Chinese society.

There were 3.34 million private companies employing 47.14 million people nationwide with total assets worth 4.2 trillion yuan at the end of June 2004, according to State Administration of Industry and Commerce statistics.

Since 1994, the number of private companies has multiplied 6.96 times, with the number of employees increasing 6.31 times. Assets in the same time have expanded 24.38 times. The survey writers conclude Chinese private entrepreneurs have the

following features:

1. The number of Chinese private entrepreneurs has increased in a stable manner each year. The writers note their "quality and social rank is increasing." In 1993, 59.9 percent of Chinese private entrepreneurs had been farming or manufacturing before starting their own business. But in 2002 63.1 percent formerly worked in a state-owned public institution or enterprise. The number of private entrepreneurs with a tertiary education has increased from 17.2 percent to 38.4 percent. Those entrepreneurs with only a primary education has dropped from 47 to 19.7 percent in the

last 10 years.

2. The operating scale of Chinese private enterprises is enlarging dramatically and their economic strength is improving. At the end of 2003, the registered capital assets volume of Chinese private enterprises was 3.5 trillion yuan, 24.4 times higher than 1994. In 1994, there were 2,254 private companies employing 100-499 employees and 271 employing more than 500 employers. But at the end of 2003, 34,617 private enterprises employed 100-500 and 3,334 employed 500-1,000. Finally, 1,130 private enterprises employed more than 1,000 staff each.
3. The economic and social

benefits deriving from private enterprises are increasing. In 2003, industrial output by private companies was 1.9 trillion yuan. Private enterprises invested in education, public construction and public health. For example, the 36-kilometer-long Hangzhou Bay Bridge, the world's longest bridge, is China's first national project by a private firm. Seventeen private companies including Song Cheng and Yager own a 50.3 percent share.

#### Survey information:

The survey was carried out by the Institute of Sociology the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Statistics are based on surveys by the State Administration of Industry and Commerce in 1993, 1994, 2003 and 2004.

## Happy Shoppers

By Dong Nan

Chinese people are happier consumers, according to the Blue Book. Less cash needs to be spent on basic living requirements, with more for enjoyment and recreation. That's a sure sign of an improvement in living quality.

According to State Statistics Bureau estimates in 2004, 36% of personal consumption by urban residents was spent on food, lower than that of 2003 (37.1%). In rural areas, that number was

45%, lower than 2003's 45.6%.

Another bureau survey found urban residents spent 16% of their income on entertainment and education, a 12% increase on 2003.

Other statistics demonstrate improving quality of life — families have more appliances and luxuries. By September 2004, 100 city families owned 133 color TVs, 90 refrigerators, 69 air conditioners, 18 VCD players, 3.1 DVD players, 2.2 pianos, 2.1 automobiles, 32 computers and 109

mobile phones.

But the Blue Book also pointed out that increasing education fees greatly influenced consumption. Li Peilin, one of the authors, said tuition fees and various "sponsorship fees" had become higher and higher in recent years. Many families with children had to reduce consumption to save money for their children's higher education. That's an unhealthy trend, he said.

#### Survey information:

Based on statistics released by the State Statistics Bureau and Research Institute of Sociology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.



In 2005, China's urban Gini coefficient — the standard measure of income distribution — is expected to rise to 0.55, up 0.2 from 0.35 in 2004.

Photos by Photocome

## Rich Man, Poor Man

By Dong Nan

A survey of 50,000 families reveals that the growing income divide is one of the most serious problems in China of 2004, and will greatly influence social justice, according to the Blue Book.

The top 10% of salary-earners nationally averaged 2,222 yuan a month for the first six months of 2004, 2.8 times higher than the average income of the whole country, and a 16.7% increase on 2003, according to the State Statistics Bureau survey.

The bottom 10% earned 233 yuan a month, a total 1,397 yuan for the first six months of 2004, 29% of the national average. That monthly yuan figure represented an 11.6% increase on 2003. But as seen earlier, rich people's salaries increased faster, widening the gap.

In 2004, 10% of urban families with the highest income owned 50% of wealth of all urban families, and 10% of urban families with the lowest income owned about 1% of the wealth of all families. The gap between different areas enlarged as well.

The wealth gap is growing. In the first six months of 2004, five provinces or municipalities had the highest income per person: Shanghai (8,513 yuan), Beijing (7,836 yuan), Zhejiang (7,771 yuan), Guangdong (7,264 yuan) and Fujian (5,879 yuan). Their average income per person increased 12.4% from 2003. But in the poorest five provinces and autonomous regions — Ningxia, Qinghai, Gansu, Heilongjiang and Xinjiang — the average income per person was 3,661 yuan, a 10.9% increase.

The industrial divide is also growing. In the first nine months of 2004, people who worked in telecommunications, computers and the software industry had the highest income (18,789 yuan), 4.25 times that of agriculture (4,455 yuan). In 2003, that gap was 3.98 times, and in 2002, the gap was 2.62 times.

#### Survey information:

Based on statistics released by the State Statistics Bureau and the Research Institute of Sociology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences survey of 50, 000 families in China.



By Zhou Ying

Five executives including the chairman and four directors of China's third-largest milk producer were arrested on Monday for embezzlement involving 417 million yuan of company funds supporting a management buyout back in July 2003.

Inner Mongolia-based Yili confirmed on Wednesday that Zheng Junhuai and five board directors were being held in custody at Baotou City detention house in Inner Mongolia. Yili's shares were suspended on Tuesday, having fallen by 10 percent on Monday.

Yang Gui, a deputy Party Secretary of the company, confirmed the arrest of chairman Zheng Junhua, deputy chairman Yang Guiqin, finance manager Zhang Xianzhu, dairy production manager Guo Shunxi and securities representative Li Yongshun.

#### Rapid rise

The company has developed rapidly since it listed in 1996. Revenue touched 6.3 billion yuan in 2003 and was expected to hit 9.5 billion yuan this year. But Yili has been the subject of intense media speculation this year over its financial operations. In June, the partially privatized, state-controlled company announced it was firing three independent directors just after the trio questioned irregular bond purchases and related dealings with its fourth biggest shareholder, Huashi Trading.

That action, widely reported by Chinese media, reportedly prompted an investigation by the China Securities Regulatory Commission. The securities watchdog began an investigation on July 21 into alleged irregularities at the company this year. That investigation fin-



# Murky Goings-on at Milk Firm

## Cops nab chairman, directors for creaming off company stock



Zheng Junhua, former chairman of the dairy company.

ished in the middle of September, but they refused to reveal the results until now.

More than 10 senior managers at Yili had been questioned by prosecutors when the police arrested the five directors on Monday.

#### Suspicious sackings

China Business News reported on Tuesday that the investi-

gation had led to the arrests and that the sacking of the company's independent directors had prompted that investigation.

Shanghai Securities News reported on July 22 that Yu Bowei, Wang Bin and Guo Xiaochuan had released a press statement on June 28 saying the company's investments in national bonds

directly imperiled the interests of shareholders. The directors suggested the company invite a special department to investigate the loss-making bond dealings. Two weeks later, Yu and Wang were "resigned" by Yili. Guo retains his post.

In a Beijing Today article on July 30, bond investments begin-

ning November 2002 had upped Yili's total debts to more than 20 million yuan by June 16 this year. That had not halted investment and Yili had since purchased another 116 million yuan of bonds.

Yili subsidiary Muquanyuanxing bought another 229 million yuan of national bonds after 280 million yuan of capital was moved to the company from Yili, Wang said. He said the deal resulted in losses of about 9 million yuan.

As the independent directors' financial protests became more and more complicated, the truth of the whole story suddenly got much clearer. Yili Group announced an end to bond investments and sold them all on August 11, costing the company a total of 23 million yuan in losses.

Beijing News on Wednesday reported all 11 executives had been asked the same question: Did you know about a certain 10-million yuan bank loan?

The Babai Dairy factory, a subsidiary of Yili Group, had asked for a 10 million yuan loan with Yili as backer. But Huashi Trading company had instead received the money.

One anonymous official from the Supreme People's Procuratorate of Inner Mongolia revealed to Beijing News last week that four of the five suspects are connected to Huashi.

#### Family ties

Founded on December 30, 1999 with 500,000 yuan registered capital, Huashi Trading



Yili cows await to know their fate.

was one of Yili's top 10 shareholders. Zheng Haiyan, daughter of Yili chairman Zheng Junhuai, held a 49.5 percent stake and other principal Huashi shareholders were also relatives of Yili executives.

Yu Bowei, one of the three independent directors, believes Huashi was simply a tool for private profit as the company never clearly explained from where its capital had derived.

Moreover, Jinxin Trust enabled the purchase of 14.3 percent of stock from Yili in 2003, Nanfang Daily reported on Monday. The transfer price of 10 yuan (US\$1.20) per share, close to 8.9 yuan in net earnings per share, was favorable to the buyers.

In light of the company's solid fundamentals and above-average financial performance, the transfer hinted at a management buyout, the paper reported.

Zheng Peimin, chairman of Shanghai Realize Investment Consulting, told Shanghai Securities News on Tuesday that listed companies conducting a clandestine buyout through a trust agency do not create any significant ethical question. The real question was whether or not the source of capital was legal.

#### Market jitters

The Yili issue has aroused heated discussion among analysts. Traders told the Associated Press that Yili's news reinforced investors' fears of hidden problems at listed companies, hurting market sentiment. The benchmark Shanghai Composite Index fell 1.2 percent to end at 1,275.46 on Monday, its lowest level since Sept. 13.

Columnist Yi Xianrong at Beijing News commented on Monday that the public should not pay attention to the result of this storm. "We should concentrate on why the case about senior managers committing crime together so frequently occurs in domestic stated-owned listed companies.

He said that the Yili Group saga showed market property was freely abused by executives at some listed companies. "They do not regard the company as a public company at all," wrote Yi. "Seeing the issue this way, I think we should launch strict supervision and severe punishment of executives."

An anonymous official from Yili told Beijing Youth Daily on Monday that senior managers were now busying themselves trying to clarify what was going on. "Actually, we don't know much more details," he said.

Yili had spent the whole day Sunday having meetings, but nobody mentioned production. "The leaders just require us to keep our employees calm and stable," he said.

But Yang Gui told Beijing Youth Daily on Wednesday the fact that some senior managers had committed a crime "would not have a strong impact on the natural operation of the company."

In the meantime, Yang Gui, deputy Party Secretary of the company and Zan Yongkuan, deputy chairmen have been appointed to run the company at the shareholders conference on Monday, pledging normal production.

Li Yunqing, a former deputy chairman of the company, was assigned to be the new chairman.

By Wang Fang/Luo Changping

An official involved in a lucrative passport scam fell off a tall building under suspicious circumstances after being "detained" by Yueyang City Government in Hunan Province on December 9.

Relatives say they have no doubt Zhang Lizhi, 31, deputy chief with the Border Control Office of Yueyang Police, was murdered.

Beijing News went to Yueyang last Monday and found a sinister wall of official silence surrounds the death of Zhang, who had served Yueyang Police for 11 years. Yueyang Government spokesman Zhong Yongbo told Beijing News that as the Zhang Lizhi case was under investi-



The government building where Zhang Lizhi (inset) was detained. Photos by Luo Changping

## Who Killed Policewoman Patsy?

### Accused officer escapes custody, takes fall off high building

gation, the city government did not want to comment.

Zhang's mother Xu Linying told Beijing News, "Before she was detained, she told me that the whole process of issuing passports was a chain and she was only a link."

Zhang's boss, section chief Liu Xiangjian, who is known to have instructed Zhang and other police to sell illegal passports, successfully fled to England at the end of October reportedly claiming he had only been acting under orders. Liu's flight from authority when wanted by authorities as the key suspect in an ongoing investigation was "totally incredible", said Xu.

She told Beijing News that on November 19, the day before her daughter was detained, her daughter had broken down in tears saying bureau leaders had ordered her to play patsy.

#### Deadly scene

Zhang was held in a two-story building on Qingnian Dongjie, Yueyang City. A source who requested anonymity told Beijing News Zhang reportedly fell 6.8 meters from the roof at noon on December 9. He said the police had already taped the scene. A broken lightning rod marks the spot where she fell and several footprints are still visible on the light-yellow wall of the building.



From this spot, Zhang fell.

## 'The death was an accident'

### — Yueyang City Government

"The city government told Zhang's relatives that Zhang tried to climb down the building by holding the lightning rod, but it broke and she fell to the ground."

Mr. Yang, one of the guards on duty that day immediately called emergency services. "When the ambulance came, she was lying there quietly," he said.

Yueyang Police Bureau received a notice from the city government on the same day saying "Fearing punishment, Zhang Lizhi committed suicide."

#### Family not told

But Zhang's relatives told Beijing Times that they did not hear anything from the government until the rumor that Zhang had committed suicide had spread all over the city.

They started to look for her body. Zhang's husband found her in Yueyang

No.2 Hospital at 2 pm. The doctor told him she was already dead when sent to the hospital.

The city government on December 13 told Beijing News they had revised the judgment on Zhang's death. The new conclusion says: "The staff who accompanied Zhang into the building did not pay attention to her and so she seized the chance to go up to the roof, where she fell. The death was an accident."

#### Passport scam

Detained on November 20, Zhang was accused of selling hundreds of illegal passports. An Yueyang Police official who declined to give his name told Beijing News that the fraud was uncovered by British police at the end of 2003.

"They informed Chinese police that a person surnamed Liao from Hunan Province brought 53 Chinese into England using fake passports. The investigation found that more than 60 percent of these illegal passports were issued by the Border Control Office of Yueyang Police Bureau," he said.

The Ministry of Public Security sent a working team to Yueyang to investigate the case. But after he left, more illegal passports were issued. No one in the Border Control Office was indicted.

Then on October 23, 2004, police in Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province found in a similar case, 164 out of 170 illegal passports had been issued by Yueyang. The Ministry of Public Security ordered Hunan Police to investigate. A week later, the Party Committee of Yueyang Police Bureau held a meeting with four leaders including Zhang and Liu at the Border Control Office.

The next day, Liu was gone. Zhang, a key suspect, was detained on November 20.

According to Bureau records, Zhang had approved and embossed 110 illegal passports with an official stamp. But she could not do this without Liu.

"Without his permission, she could not issue a single passport. All in all, a deputy chief has little power," a colleague of Zhang told Beijing News.

A new policy issued September last year by Yueyang Police required only local residential documents and identity cards to obtain a passport. But in most of the rest of China, a passport applicant requires reference letters from a local police station or work unit.

Guangdong and Zhejiang illegal immigration operators acquired their fake residency for their customers and applied for passports, Zhang's colleagues told Beijing News.

A close friend of Liu Xiangjian told Beijing News that a day after Liu's arrival in England, he allegedly telephoned the investigators and said if the investigation team didn't properly clear things up, he would not return.

It was not his idea, Liu said, but an instruction from higher leadership to sell illegal passports. But Bureau leadership refused to confirm if the friend's claim was true.

The investigation team told Beijing News that Liu had confessed to issuing 230 illegal passports for 30,000 yuan. One third of the money was used to decorate the office building and the rest was kept in a bureau account.

"My daughter didn't need to make money by breaking the law," said Xu. "My husband is the secretary of Yueyang Political Consultative Conference. Her husband works in a famous local securities company. Her father-in-law is the vice president of a bank branch in Yueyang. She had no motive for the crime."



Liu Xiangjian





Liu, on set with "big brother" Jackie Chan

By Huan Xu and Yan Zhang

It was 1993, and the crew were gathered on the set of the movie *Kung Fu Master*. The famous Hong Kong movie star (once a regular collaborator with Jackie Chan) suddenly kicked Liu Bo in his belly; knocking him off his feet and sending him crashing to the ground several metres away. Liu was dazed by the impact and couldn't get up for a while. But when the star walked over to inquire about his condition, he struggled to get himself up and simply replied: "I'm fine". Much to his surprise, the actor let out a curse and said: "Get up if you're OK. Don't lie down there and get in my way!"

When Liu got home in the evening, he could barely move because of the pain. He wanted to have a hot bath but dozed off. The next morning when he was woken by his mother to go to the studio, he couldn't gather enough strength to move one muscle. She cried bitterly and asked him to quit such a hard job. But Liu forced himself to continue. He was paid 200 yuan for one day's work, more than what his mother could get for a whole month. How could he give up such a job?

#### To succeed onstage and to suffer backstage

Looking younger than his 29 years and being gentle and a bit shy, Liu doesn't seem to fit the part of "grand and majestic" as his Chinese name would suggest but rather a quiet and smart rabbit, like his Chinese zodiac sign. You certainly wouldn't think he used to be a stuntman in Kung Fu movies. Once a famous stunt actor in China working with super stars like Jackie Chan and Jet Li, Liu is now a martial arts and TV series director.

One day he was shooting a scene on a Jet Li movie. When Li faked a quick blow with one palm, the stuntman in front of him was yanked back by a wire and hit another man behind, causing four stunt actors standing in a row to hit each other one by one. Being the last one in the row and suspended by a thin wire, Liu Bo received the full impact of all three people in front of him. All of a sudden, the wire snapped and Liu was thrown down five metres to the ground and landed flat on his back. "I think I passed out for a moment but quickly came around. I tasted blood in my throat. But I had to tell myself to keep going and not give up," he recollected. Later on, Liu got a chance to be a stuntman in Jet Li's movie *Once Upon A Time In China III* and stayed with the production crew for over half a year. Watching Li acting in the movie, Liu was filled with admiration and secretly made up his mind to become a success-

ful actor like Jet Li in the future.

Both Liu's parents are teachers and received very low salaries during the 1970s and 1980s. During his childhood, Liu often went hungry and had to steal vegetables from fields and load them onto a cart with his two elder sisters. Liu would later remember his tough upbringing, as well as the actor's motto: if you want to succeed on stage, you must suffer backstage first. To earn more money, he never winced at doing



Now Liu works behind the camera

the most dangerous stunts. During the 10 years between 1989 and 1999 when he worked as a stuntman, Liu was taken to hospital with various kinds of injuries on more than 20 occasions. Once he broke his femur after falling from a three storey building and had to stay in the hospital for over six months "I donated my hard-earned money to the hospital," he remembered ruefully.

Although the 200 yuan daily salary Liu earned in the Hong Kong movie business was much higher than the average income of most people in the Chinese mainland, there were no proper contracts or organisations to protect the stuntmen, and they had to work very hard without much protection. But Liu Bo remembered: "Jackie Chan truly deserves the name of a big brother; he's thoughtful about others." Liu worked as a stuntman on Shanghai Knights in 1999 and Chan paid special attention to safety. He always asked several stuntmen to practice and improve one action before he tried it himself for the final shot.

#### From an actor to a stuntman

When Liu Bo was four years old, he got measles, which soon turned into pneumonia and seriously weakened him. To improve his health, his father, a physical culture instructor at Beijing Chinese Opera School, began to teach him to turn somersaults. As he often watched students in the school doing somersault, Liu Bo could soon do it better than his father. He liked to challenge the students and was thrilled because

'I thought I passed out for a moment but quickly came around. I tasted blood in my throat. But I had to tell myself to keep going and not give up...'

he always beat them.

Young Liu entered the preparatory class for the China Drama College in 1982 to learn "hualian (the painted face)", a kind of acrobatic fighting technique in Chinese opera. He always got the highest marks in the specialised courses. In 1988, he was formally admitted to the China Drama College. Thinking he would perform in Chinese opera for the rest of his life, he did his training exercises very hard each day. While other students would slack off a bit or go out to play when their teacher was away, he would shut himself in the exercise room to do somersaults and practice his skills, even though he would be black and blue after each practice session.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, corporal punishment was still a common practice in Chinese opera schools. Once Liu sneaked out of an evening class with some classmates and was caught by his teacher. He asked the students to stand in a line and beat each of them once with a stick, drawing blood each time. "Being beaten by a teacher was inevitable in

those days, but I was quick and very nimble and often moved before the stick landed, so I was able to get away from many punishments," Liu explained.

One day in 1989, the students were called to line up in a row and turn somersaults. No reason was given; the teachers only asked them to do as many somersaults as they could in order to find who was the best. Loving to do somersaults since his childhood, Liu was eager to show off and somersault all the way to the wall. He was picked out as the best after doing the highest and most somersaults. It turned out that Hong Kong film director Chang Cheh (whose films have influenced many Hong Kong action movie directors, including John Woo) had come personally to pick a stuntman for the movie *Hot Wheel (Feng Huo Lun)*. Having never acted in a movie before, Liu felt nervous at first. But he came alive whenever he was in front of the movie camera. Liu had started out on his career as a stuntman, aged just 14.

Three years later, Liu graduated from the college and was assigned to Huaxia Arts Troupe. Soon he found that he was moving farther away from his dream of performing Chinese opera in a theatre, as the troupe only survived by doing small shows in bars and restaurants. Two months later, despite strong objections from his family, a disappointed Liu decided to change his profession. He left the troupe and became a full time stuntman.

#### I want to be John Woo

Liu had once only dreamed of becoming an outstanding Kung Fu actor like Jet Li. But although he envies the glamour of an actor's life, he decided to set his eyes on working behind the camera. After working as a stuntman for 10 years, acting in supporting roles and directing martial arts occasionally, he had become familiar with martial arts performing and knew what he was doing.

While working as a stuntman, Liu began to learn about cutting, photography and creating characters for the script. "I paid special attention to things about directing and learned a lot from my Hong Kong colleagues, which really laid the foundation for my future career," he says. In early 1999 Liu Bo was invited to work as a director for martial arts scenes in the TV series *The Emperor's Sister in Law, Tian Guihua*. This was the springboard for his new career.

Martial arts directors not only need to choreograph the fight scenes but sometimes demonstrate them to actors. Liu soon gained the nickname 'Iron Man,' as he often worked 17 to 18 hours a day for more than 10 days continuously without any rest. He puts it this way: "a martial arts director must work harder and think faster than other people. The fights

he designs must please not only the director, but also the actors and the audience." When Liu was working on *The Han Emperor* in 2001, one scene required Chen Daoming, a well known TV star, to fight in an elaborate style with a sword to defeat a group of enemies. Liu had carefully worked out the scene, but Chen wasn't happy and suggested that, as a great martial arts master, he shouldn't need to really fight in order to kill the bad guys. A bit disappointed, Liu went to the toilet with his script. One and a half hours later he came out with a new scene in which Chen used just two fingers to deal with his enemies.

2003 saw Liu Bo directing an action scene for the TV series *Four Weddings and One Funeral* in a residential building. The scene was set at midnight, and a woman was being pushed downstairs by two men and killed instantly. During the shoot, the stuntwoman rolled down the stairs crying out. Liu designed the action so realistically that all the crew were very impressed by the effects. When everyone was having a rest after the shoot, they heard a loud knocking at the door. As soon as they opened it, several policemen burst in and knocked several crew members down to the floor. The neighbours had dialled 110 for help having heard the noise. Liu quickly jumped aside, shouting: "we're shooting a movie!"

Now Liu has his own team, which is affectionately known as 'Iron Group' in their circles, thanks to their physical strength. Once a stuntman himself, Liu knows how to protect his people. He explained, "I've risked my life before. I jumped down from a three storey building and it hurt badly. I'm not letting this happen to my men. Otherwise I won't deserve to be called their 'big brother.'" Liu has spent 200,000 yuan buying a whole set of safety equipment. "Although it's not as good as those used in Hollywood, it's the best in China. I even learned to use computer graphics and can shoot some difficult actions in front of a blue screen and process the shots in a computer," he said. "If you use your brains, you don't have to work so hard and can do a wonderful shot and save money at the same time." Liu is happy to hear people call him 'Safe Bo' because not a single accident has happened in any of the movies he has directed.

As a native Beijinger who's always off working in other parts of the country, Liu has become unaccustomed to the climate of his hometown. He's just spent a year shooting in Suzhou and after a short rest he'll be off to start work directing a new TV series. "John Woo is my idol. He was once a martial arts director like me." Matching his idol is Liu's new ambition.



By Peng Juan

A conference to commend the compilation of Chinese folk art series of book, the fourth of the kind, was recently held at the Great Hall of the People. An exhibition relating to this compilation efforts was opened at the National Museum. They were sponsored by the Ministry of Culture and the National Art Science Planning and Direction Group and undertaken by the Center of Ethnic and Folk Literature and Arts Development. The collections, which altogether boast 450 volumes with 500 million words and have taken about 25 years to put together, are finally near completion.

**Initiation of the cultural Great Wall**

Since 1979, the Ministry of Culture, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles and related academic societies have jointly initiated the Chinese National Folk Art Collection Series compilation project. Tens of thousands of scholars, artists, folklorists and cultural workers have been actively involved in this 500 million-word project for the past 25 years. Backed mainly by the Ministry of Culture, more than 100,000 people have dedicated the prime of their lives for the last 25 years to this huge project. During the process, six of the ten chief editors and another 1,000 participants have passed away.

In 1979, the Ministry of Culture, State Ethnic Affairs Commission and Chinese Musicians Association launched the compilation of the *Collection of Chinese Folk Songs*, *Collection of Chinese Traditional Opera Music*, *Collection of Chinese Folk and Ethnic Instrumental Music* and *Collection of Chinese Quyi Music*. Later, the Ministry of Culture, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, the Chinese Dancers Association, the Chinese Dramatists Association, the China Society for the Study of Folk Literature and Art and the Chinese Ballad Singers Association jointly announced the compilation of the *Collection of Chinese Folk Dances*, *Records of Chinese Traditional Opera*, *Collection of Chinese Folktales*, *Collection of Chinese Ballads*, *Collection of Chinese Proverbs* and *Records of Chinese Quyi*. The editing and compilation of the series was funded by the central and local governments. After the conference for the project held by the National Art Science Planning and Direction Group in June 1991, the ten collections entered the publishing stage.

Obviously, the incredible extent and profundity of Chinese culture requires tremendous hard work just to sort it out. However, this project is finally coming to an end.

History will bear witness to its enormous academic and historical value. This huge work has promoted the fundamental build-up of Chinese art in general. During this project, many opera and dance forms, song styles,

arias, proverbs, folktales and legends, which previously were rarely seen, have made a comeback.

**A cultural project of unprecedented dimensions**

Writing and compiling the collections, with a total of 500 million words in 450 volumes, involved exploration, salvation, collection and compilation of the folk, literary and artistic materials of different ethnic minorities in China's diverse regions by tens of thousands of Chinese cultural workers. It is hence a literary project of unprecedented dimensions both in China and the world.

*The Chinese Folk and Ethnic Culture and Arts Collections* takes an in-depth look at China's five thousand years of cultural tradition and accumulation based on first-hand materials from on-the-spot investigation and exploration. It encompasses the rich cultural and artistic resources of all 56 Chinese ethnicities and covers the main disciplines of Chinese folk art. It is the first Chinese art collection series to specialize in the oral and intangible heritages of Chinese folk culture.

The goal of the *Chinese Folk and Ethnic Culture and Arts Collections* is to combine intangible spiritual heritage handed down orally for thousands of years

## Chinese Cultural Great Wall Unveiled

with that emanating from more specific, scientifically analyzed sources, such as books, artifacts and cultural relics. It is a source of systematic and authentic material for culture research into Chinese sociology, history, religion, folk culture, customs and ethnic minorities.

Each ethnicity has shown its artistic talents and aesthetic values through cultural creativity and performances that have nourished China's rich culture and laid solid foundations for development of new aspects of Chinese culture. The series presents excellent Chinese folk literary and artistic achievements from several thousands of years, revealing their course of development and aesthetic worth.

**A glimpse of the ten collections**

The series includes ten collec-

tions on a variety of topics, covering almost every corner of Chinese folk literature and art, such as songs, music, dance, opera, fairy tales, stories, ballads and proverbs. They record their initiation, development and adaptations throughout history and analyze their development.

*The Collection of Chinese Folk Songs* displays the quintessence of Chinese folk songs, which were passed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. While it was being compiled in different provinces, the editors insisted on the principle of large scale, wide scope and high quality as they looked through music recordings, scores, pictures, texts and videos or photos. Each volume displays the unique features of the regional folk songs in four parts: pictures, texts, scores



Antique book references used in compilation of the Records of Chinese Traditional Opera.

and folk singers. This book collected 40,000 folk songs selected from altogether 300,000 songs nationwide, accompanied with nearly 2,000 exquisite performing photos. Of the total 30 volumes with 49.32 million words, twenty-eight volumes have already been released, and the last two will be published by 2005.

The musical series, the *Collection of Chinese Traditional Opera Music*, systematically sorts out the fine opera heritages of different ethnic groups and regions, and new achievements of Chinese traditional operas after the establishment of the People's Republic of China. The collection contains 30 volumes organized on the basis of national administrative regions, with a total of 59.22 million words, about 20,000 arias, 10,000 instrumental tunes, 200 highlights from operas, 2,500 historical pictures and 4,000 artists' introductions.

The main contents in the *Collection of Chinese Folk and Ethnic Instrumental Music* are traditional instrumental arias with rich historical connotations performed by folk artists in the past two decades, and the representative instrumental music pieces (except ancient string instruments) collected between the 1950s and the 1970s. Religious, palace and sacrificial music are also collected due to their close relationship with instruments. The whole collection will be finished by 2006.

*The Collection of Chinese Quyi Music* dynamically incorporates Quyi music, social life and cultural tradition in various forms of expressions such

as audio, music scores, texts, graphs and photos. The accurate recording of the scores, the precise overviews and the detailed explanations all reflect the development and the current condition of the time-honored Quyi music. It is amazing that 509 kinds of Quyi music were created by the Han people alone.

*The Collection of Chinese Folk Dances* endeavors to precisely, scientifically and comprehensively record the folk dances of different ethnicities and regions. Not only are the gestures, music, costumes and properties recorded, but also the prevailing areas, historical development, styles, features, relevant legends, documentary files, artists' introductions, crafts and folk customs of the dances. The collection records numerous folk dances with an abundance of photos as well. All 30 volumes with 42.13 million words have been published.

*The Records of Chinese Traditional Opera* is the first professional opera history sponsored by the Chinese government, reflecting the histories and the current conditions of various local and national operas. The collection contains 15,000 pictures, covering 394 different operas, 5,318 repertoires, 1,832 performance sites, 730 opera historic sites, 1,584 journals and 4,220 biographies. This gigantic work provides a panoramic view of Chinese opera culture. All the 31 volumes with 32.34 million words have been published.

*The Collection of Chinese Folktales* comprehensively reflects the current condition of Chinese folk oral prose, with faithful records of the best sto-

ries passed down orally in various districts and ethnic groups, characterized by distinctive ethnic and local flavors as well as literal, appreciative and scientific values. Various oral forms of folktales accompanied by plenty of photos, are collected. Twenty-three of the total 30 volumes have been published, with the rest scheduled for publication by 2006.

*The Collection of Chinese Ballads* gathers folk ballads of various forms and from different regions and ethnic groups since the May 4th Movement in 1919. More than 100,000 folklorists worked on an in-depth investigation across the country. Fifteen volumes with a collection of 24,695 ballads have been published.

*The Collection of Chinese Proverbs* compiles prevailing proverbs from ancient times to nowadays in different ethnic groups and regions. The 45 million-word collection is composed of ten categories with abundant photos and attaches great importance to the ethnic flavors, special usages, dialects and literary quotations, each with concise explanations.

Each volume of the *Records of Chinese Quyi* has a unified style of four different sections. The History section covers aspects such as Quyi genres and titles, music, performance, stage art, troupes, performing sites, performing customs, relics, publications, episodes, folklore and proverbs. The collection boasts 29 volumes with a total of 20.3 million words. Fifteen volumes have been published and the rest is to be completed by 2006.

## 50 Years And Going Strong



Cai Yaoxian

Photo by Xiang Li

By Pan Hao

Cai Yaoxian started learning Kunqu Opera at the age of 11 and is still at it now at the age of 62. Cai started at the Kunqu acting class of the East China Traditional Opera Academy in 1961, but her love for the form had begun earlier, during her childhood.

"I was captured by traditional opera at the age of six or seven. My grandparents were big fans of opera so they often brought me to the theatre, and the colorful costumes were always an attraction for me," Cai told *Beijing Today* last Friday, after weeks of preparation and rehearsals for a four-night series of Kunqu Opera classics to celebrate her 50th Anniversary of Kunqu acting. "I will be in two shows, playing the lead in *The Story of the Western Chamber* and *Pipa Story*, part two," she added.

"Lucky" was the word that Cai used to describe her artistic life. She still remembers teacher Zhou Chuancang who persuaded her mother to permit the talented little Cai to enroll in the East China Traditional Opera Academy. "They taught us everything

they knew without any reservation and treated us like their own kids," Cai said. She spoke softly when she mentioned her beloved teachers. In the early 1950s, the government decided to revive and enhance the fading arts, so many opera theatres and academies were founded, along with Kunqu opera classes.

In 1979, Cai was transferred to North Kunqu Opera Theatre after many years' of performances, and it was a milestone in her artistic life. During the 25 years from 1979-2004, Cai believes her Kunqu skills and techniques matured and she gradually formed her own style, merging the characteristics of the Southern and Northern styles together. Chinese theater scholar Ma Shaopo noted, "She brings Yingying back to life in *The Story of the Western Chamber*. And Kunqu specialist Wang Weixian said, "Her expression in singing and reciting and her movements naturally flow into one another." Likewise, Cai Yaoxian appreciated and was always grateful for what Northern Kunqu artists had done for her. "There have never been

any regional discriminations," she said.

From 1983 to the late 1990s, Kunqu Opera experienced another crisis, as audiences waned and many young artists left the theatre. Kunqu, which had been developed during the Ming dynasty and had once been the dominant opera form in Beijing, appeared to be dying out. "Often for months, there was not even one show in the theatre," says Cai. She still clearly remembers those "gray days". In spite of the low demand, she kept performing and kept the faith that Kunqu would be rediscovered. Sure enough, in 2001, Kunqu Opera was named one of the 19 Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO. "I knew that day would come," says Cai with relief. Now more and more people are developing an interest in Kunqu Opera.

Among the classics of the genre, *Pipa Story* is Cai's favorite, partly because she feels a connection between herself and the main character, Lady Zhao Wu, and her experiences. She explained, "when you are in your

40s, the experiences you have enable you to better understand the tragic characters." But even if there isn't any particular connection, Cai feels getting into character and concentration are both essential qualities. "You have to be in the same mood as the character is supposed to be in," she added. One of the golden rules she has taught her own students is this: an audience will lose concentration as soon as an actor does so.

Presently, Cai also devotes herself to digging up and saving some of the relics of Kunqu Opera from the dusty files. Among these classics, one of Tang Xianzu's four dreams, *Zichai Story*, is her latest finding. "We even found the complete music sheet in the library," says Cai, raising her voice to express her excitement. She hopes the files will be used for a vivid Kunqu Opera soon. Still, there is one cloud on the horizon. Cai laments the rarity of composers these days for Kunqu Opera, which is bound to limit its development. She'll just have to dust off some more of the old classics.



## What's New

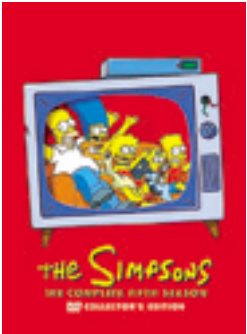
By Tom Spearman

## CD

The Beastie Boys: *To the 5 Burroughs*

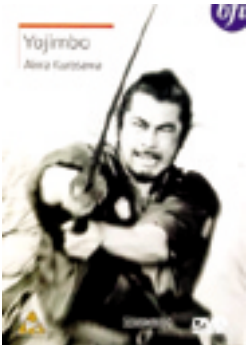
Just how bad can George W. Bush be when he inspires such magnificent loathing? Radiohead and Green Day both devoted their most recent album titles to him, calling him a thief and an "American Idiot", and now the ire of the Beastie Boys towards their president has reached as far as Beijing's album shelves. The Beasties don't like the situation, "the US attacking other nations," and they want more "gun controlling." But then, they are from New York, capital of the liberal world. Their celebration of the Big Apple's eternal virtues on latest single "*An Open Letter to NYC*," has a defiant sound to it, chorusing "Asian, middle eastern and Latin, black, white, New York, you make it happen." But they're not all serious these days. The samples are often hilarious and opener *Ch-Check it Out* is an infectious reminder of the band's partying roots.

## DVD



## The Simpsons, Season Five

Still haven't finished watching season four? Think you've got enough Simpsons box sets for now? Think again. This season has several of the greatest episodes, shows that you simply can't watch too many times. This reviewer could watch Sideshow Bob stepping on rakes in "*Cape Feare*" on repeat all day long. And how could one adequately describe "*Deep Space Homer*?" Series one, two, three, four, they just kept getting better, but many believe season five to be the peak, the finest moment of officially the greatest TV show in the history of the world, ever. Well, not to labor the point, but the 35 yuan you'll pay for the five disc set is quite a bargain. Extras include the French audio option which is nearly as funny as being able to understand the jokes, plus a commentary track from creator Matt Groening and various other contributors.



## Yojimbo

Known as a "tongue in cheek" samurai movie, the humor might leave some viewers behind and this is certainly a stylistic oddity in some ways, but *Yojimbo* is essential viewing, and not only because it was remade by Sergio Leone as "*A Fistful of Dollars*". Watching Toshiro Mifune kick some butt, samurai style, is at least as enjoyable an experience as seeing Clint Eastwood wield his six-shooter pistol in the later version. *Yojimbo* was made in 1961 and apparently Kurosawa was influenced by western movies in making it. Here, Mifune walks into a town gone rotten and plays the two local warring factions off against each other. This DVD is a Criterion Collection release and even though it's short on features, they've done a superb job on the transfer. The widescreen presentation looks superb and appropriately epic. Being one of Kurosawa's more accessible movies, this would make ideal Christmas matinee viewing.

By Jacqueline Yu

If someone told you the plot of the French ballet *Sylvia* by Delibes, you might think it was completely daft. And if you had gone to Poly Theatre on Tuesday expecting to see a complicated love story, you may have found it a bit silly. But come on, it's a ballet! Ballet is mainly about seeing a group of beautiful people dancing to pleasant music, affecting your sentimental side as much as anything else. Storytelling is only a part of it, sometimes not even that important.

It's better to at least give the plot a brief mention, though. Sylvia, a nymph dedicated to the service of Diana, the goddess of hunting, accidentally shoots dead a shepherd called Aminta, who is in love with her. Eros, the god of Love, causes her to fall in love with the dead shepherd, as a punishment for scorning his love. She is then kidnapped by a wicked hunter called Orion and carried off to his cave, where she teaches his retinue to make wine and gets him drunk so she can escape. Meanwhile, Eros brings Aminta back to life, and the two are united. In the third act, with the help of Diana, they kill Orion and live happily ever after.

# Sylvia Opens Beijing International Dance Festival



Zhang Jian as Sylvia

Photo by Cui Jun

The three-act ballet's story began in a work called *Aminta* by the Renaissance playwright Torquato Tasso (1544-1595), and Clement Philibet Leo Delibes (1836-1891) composed it as one of his most famous ballet scores. Even Tchaikovsky judged it to be better than his own "*Swan Lake*".

When Louis Merante originally choreographed *Sylvia* for Opera de Paris in 1876, it broke with Romantic ballet tradition, portraying women as maiden warriors rather than as the ethereal image of dainty fairies. But the version that National Ballet of China revived was the 1979 version choreographed by Lycette Darsonval and even the costumes and setting designed by Philippe Binot are mainly according to those designed by Bernard Daye in 1979, which give a charming impression of Italian Renaissance paintings of ancient Greece.

Act 1 starts with almost nothing actually happening. A bunch of dryads, naiads and satyrs just keep dancing, but Act 2 and 3 are much livelier, even though they may leave a few questions to be answered. "Why did poor Orion have to be killed by all of them, just because he also loves Sylvia?" a child's voice came from behind. "How useless Aminta is, always needing the help of one of the gods!" a male audience member murmured to his friend during the interval.

Silly it may seem, but the dancers' performance was no joke. Zhang Jian, exquisite as ever, presented a conventional Sylvia. Han Bo, as Aminta, has a slender figure, with long limbs and an innocent, youthful look. In Act 3 he looked a little out-of-breath during some of the more exacting dance manoeuvres.

Of all the male dancers, perhaps the one who did most to grab the spotlight was Wu Yan, as Eros. Wu is still little known among most fans of the National Ballet of China, as he has only been in the company for two years. For this rising star, Eros is undoubtedly a character perfectly suited to him, allowing Wu to show his speed, elegance and powerful turns and jumps. His athletic performance was reminiscent of Angel Corella in American Ballet Theatre's *Le Corsaire*.

*Sylvia* is the opening show of the 2nd Beijing International Dance Festival, which will last till the end of January 2005. National Ballet of China will perform *Raise the Red Lantern* this Friday till Sunday in Poly Theatre and a selected repertoire in People's Great Hall next Wednesday.

## Getting into the Spirit

By Ma Zhe

Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way! This song will be playing all over the world again in the next few days along with Christmas trees, turkeys and wonderful gifts. If you love to enjoy the Christmas season and if you love classic music too, a concert named Joy to the world, Christmas in Beijing, which was held in the Red House Entertainment Hall in Fengtai last Saturday, was a good warm-up for celebrating the holiday.

Two Chinese singers, baritone Wu Chuncan and soprano Zhou Lingzhen performed some beautiful Christmas songs and carols such as O, Holy night and Wiegenlied, with piano accompaniment from pianist Chen

better when he later performed a piece from Czechoslovakia, *When I Think of Your Songs*. By singing this song he once won a special prize in a music competition in Geneva. Although the entertainment hall was not in terribly good condition and there were some noises from a club next door sometimes, this song touched every heart in the auditorium.

Before the interval, the children's choir came up to the stage to perform *La Nuit* with Mr. Wu and Miss Zhou. These kids obviously attracted a big number of fans to the concert, and their supporters were very excited with the job the children did. Although the fans who applauded most loudly were parents and grandparents



Photo by Ma Zhe

when the singers performed *O Tannenbaum* with the choir by the side of a Christmas tree on the stage.

Wu performed Franz Schubert's classic chant *Wiegenlied* before the soprano and choir came up for the last song *Stille Nacht*. The children's choir finally surprised everyone by singing a very famous Chinese song *Please Bring My Songs to Your Home*.

## Modernsky's Melody Revolution

By Wang Yao

Since September this year, Modernsky Recording has launched a series of albums designed to cater to different tastes. *Beijing Today* listened to a few of them.



The end of September saw the release of a debut album from blind folk singer Zhou Yunpeng, regarded as a contemporary A Bing (a famous erhu player, named Hua Yanjun, 1887-1950). Zhou's album *Chen Mo Ru Mi De Hu Xi (Silent and Intangible Breath)* features collaborations with Xiao He and Wan Xiaoli, two singers signed to Modernsky. Compared to their more mainstream recordings, Zhou's album has flowing melodies, with a sentimental sound that can carry listeners off into a dream world. The guitar sound has a particularly rich atmosphere to it. Traditional instruments, such as drum, flute, and harmonica, collaborate smoothly to finish the different parts of the leading tune. Zhou's lyrics come from his complicated experiences in life and music. Zhou has al-

ready printed some of his poetry, and now he uses his poetic ability to reveal more about his life. *Lan Hu (Blue Tiger)*, the last song on the album, sounds different to the folk feel of the other nine songs, having a jazzier sound to it.

PK14 now release their second album *Shei Shei Shei He Shei Shei Shei (Who Who Who and Who Who Who)*. The band has a post-punk style but there's more to it than that. On the whole, the album has a relatively gentle rhythm, but it's given an edge by lead guitarist Xu Bo and the jumpy vocals of lead singer Yang Haisong. Their lyrics sound simple, but different people can recall their different growing experiences when they hear the words "That's blood of youth; that's blood of juvenility," and "Be quick, under the cover of zest! Be quick, under the cover of youth!" Though it is a punk album, there is



no roaring or cursing. They use guitar riffs, classical punk drumbeats and bass for their effects. The vocalist does not polish his singing and his nat-

ural voice has a true resonance of youth.

Electro band Supermarket issues its third album *Fan Rong De (Prosperous)*. The theme of the album is quite positive and relaxed. The song *Market* is dominated by keyboard, with the effect of remoteness and gentleness, and drum, with more of a rocking sound. The two contrasting rhythms have completely dif-



ferent themes, but they go together well. *Beautiful Girl* is another version of *Lotus* from Long Kuan Jiu Duan (a duo band formed by Tian Peng, vocalist for Supermarket, and Long Kuan, a female singer). If *Lotus* is a happy song, *Beautiful Girl* sounds witty and frank. The main tune is the same with *Lotus*, a lively one. The electro-vocal keeps on singing "money". It sounds short but powerful and also numb and cold. The vocalist Tian Peng's hoarse but rhythmic voice has an effect in warming up the song and his voice shows his down-to-earth attitude to money.



Domestic computing leader Lenovo Group made headlines around the world last week when it acquired IBM's personal computing division. The deal not only marked a major move into the global market for the Chinese company, it drew the attention of many students and young people looking for exciting careers in the IT field. So noted Li Mei, the company's recruitment manager and its human resources department manager Wang Jianzhong when they talked about Lenovo's future recruitment plans during an online chat session on <http://edu.sina.com.cn> held on December 13.

Since it was established in 1984, Lenovo has grown to have over 10,000 employees around the world. And the addition of IBM's highly reputed PC division should only further push the growth of Lenovo's team and its role in the global market.

In order to bring in new talent, the company launched a nationwide recruitment tour in October in which Lenovo representatives gave lectures in eight cities, including Beijing, Shanghai, Xi'an and Chengdu, the main work locations for more than 100 positions at the company posted on [www.54club.com](http://www.54club.com).

#### Values and standards:

**Q: Now that IBM and Lenovo have teamed up, which will have more influence on the other in terms of corporate values?**

**Li:** I have hired some people who last worked at IBM, and



Photo by Imaginechina

## Talking Jobs and Corporate Culture:

# PC Powerhouse

I have found they have easily adapted and fit into the work environment at Lenovo. So, I think the two companies have similar styles and ways of working, such as promoting working efficiency, communication skills and positive attitudes towards clients and the job.

**Q: How do you select candidates? Do you set ideal proportions of holders of bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees?**

**Li:** At Lenovo, we do not select people simply based on their educational backgrounds, so we can't really say anything clear about rates. In keeping with the company's core values, we hire recent graduates based

on five main factors.

First is attitude about providing services, not only to clients, but also to colleagues, bosses, subordinates and partners.

Second is an eagerness to learn, because in the IT field, where development is incredibly fast, no one can keep up if they don't strive to constantly learn.

Third is the spirit of innovation, which is needed in all the company's departments, from research and development to sales and marketing to management.

Fourth is the spirit of teamwork and last is communication skills.

#### Interviews:

**Q: I will graduate in 2005 and want to apply for a sales position. What kind of interviews will I go through?**

**Li:** To begin with, we have entrance exams that check candidates' abilities and English. English proficiency is one focus of Lenovo. This year, we will give all candidates part of an article to translate. Those who pass the exam will get interviews.

The first round of interviews is targeted at basic capabilities and conducted by the HR department. The second round is meant to check professional knowledge, including technology, and is conducted by department directors and managers.

**Q: I always feel nervous during interviews. Do you have any suggestions?**

**Li:** I think nervousness is often a factor of self-confidence. As professional recruiters, we like to do warm-up exercises before starting formal interviews. Nearly all the recruiters in our company are kind, sincere young women who respect every interviewee and help them relax.

#### Career development:

**Q: As a recent graduate, can I expect my career to develop quickly working at Lenovo?**

**Li:** Many students are concerned about career development and training opportunities. I can tell you that recent graduates contribute a lot to every department in the company. For example, in our research and development department, one employee hired just after he graduated from Huazhong University of Science and Technology several years ago has already been promoted to a senior engineer position.

**Q: How many paths do you offer for career development?**

**Li:** The two ways to further your career at Lenovo is to become a manager or a specialist or expert. After several years of working, you may find that you are not suitable for management and have more potential in research, technological support or human resources. So you should choose the path that will lead to what you want.

(Edited by Xie Lixue)

## Government Stamps New Professions

By Zhao Hongyi

The Ministry of Labor and Social Security gave its official endorsement of 10 professions by setting formal requirements for recognized professionals in the field on December 2.

"There is high market demand for these new professions and they are open to both domestic and overseas competitors," Vice Minister Zhang Xiaojian said at a press release in Shanghai.

On August 20, in the first round of official endorsements, the ministry backed nine professions.

The ministry promised to release new lists once every three months as a guide for people to find new jobs and receive new training.

The first nine professions and professionals recognized are: personal image design; jewelry design and processing; automobile design; locksmiths; SMS service providers; marine and river mammal trainers; aquaculture quality inspectors; gas station attendants; and beef classifiers.

The second group of 10 are: business project design; exhibition design; DV program designers and producers; landscape designers; mould designers; construction model designers and producers; furniture designers; customer service managers; pet caretakers; and cartoon producers.

## White-collars Emphasize Education, Training

One-third believe making money is most important

By Ayi

What was your greatest work achievement in 2004? Among white collars across China polled in a survey jointly conducted by zhaopin.com and sina.com's career channel, the most popular answer was 'learning new skills and gaining new expertise'.

Above high pay or promotions, over 30 percent of the Chinese professionals surveyed in the study said that knowledge, skills and expertise were keys to job satisfaction and lasting career success.

Sixty seven percent of respondents declared they had clear career objectives. Thirty nine percent of those said they were coming closer to realizing their goals, while 28 percent answered that the fulfillment of their objectives was moving further away.

The remaining 33 percent confessed they had no real goals other than to make money, whether for themselves or to support their families.

While many people are not working for the money, that does not mean they would not like more of it. Far more than half of the white collar employees surveyed said they were not satisfied with their salaries because their payment was not compatible with their

workloads or contributions.

Of those considering themselves underpaid, 24 percent said their salaries were 20 to 30 percent lower than they should be and a bolder 20 percent said 50 to 100 percent lower. Only 20 percent said their payment was within their expectations and a mere three percent said they were 'fully' satisfied.

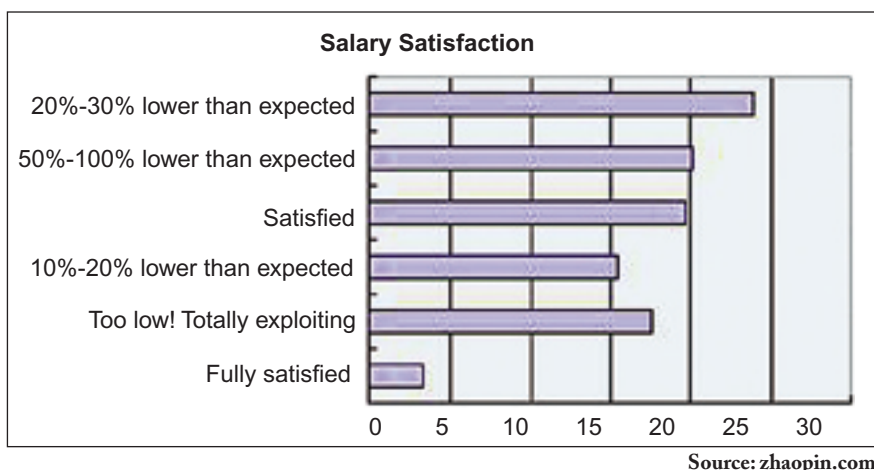
Low paid or not, few people were ready to leave their jobs to find better work. A full 67 percent said they had not changed their jobs in 2004, either believing it was too dangerous, career-wise, to frequently switch positions

or that loyalty to present employers would pay off sooner or later.

Professionals aged 25 to 35 proved to be the most dynamic cross-section of the survey pool, relatively frequently changing jobs in order to accrue new experience, expand their abilities and harness their potential. Many people over 35 said they were afraid of struggling to find a new job after quitting their positions and therefore thought it was often better to just stay in place.

The survey found recent graduates are becoming more realistic about workplace conditions, expecting lower salaries and believing three to five years of stable work make a good start to a career.

More than 3,000 people across China, mostly office professionals, replied to the surveys, which were posted online on both websites from November 15 and December 15.



## Situations Vacant

Jiangsu-based YOSO Electronics ([www.yoso.com.cn](http://www.yoso.com.cn)) invites agents nationwide for its CD-ROMs, DVD-ROMs, COM-BOs, CD-R/RWs and DVD-R/RW products. Interested? Contact: Mr. Li at 0510-271 4856, 238 8339, 13812525708

Vacancies available for English teachers and editors. You can do it part-time or at home. If you are a native English speaker and will stay in China for more than three months, please contact: 13381392538 (Julia), or email: caoyanqin008@sohu.com

The Southern Industrial Zone, Bincheng District, Binzhou, Shandong Province, is looking for two reps and five consultants in Beijing. Annual salaries range between 25,000 and 50,000 yuan.

Major business is to attract investors to the industrial zone.

Please contact: Mr. Chen at 13561569235

Jinzhou Yinbo Foreign Languages & Computer School looking for teachers of foreign languages and computers. Tel: 0311-316000 Website: [www.inhb.com](http://www.inhb.com)

Webmasters wanted. Familiarity with the Internet, web page design and music composition software essential. Love of music useful. Contact Mr. Hu at: 6333-1671 ext. 8006.

## Seeking Employment

Chen Yurong, PhD in consumer psychology and master's of economics, has been a housekeeper, reporter, editor, economic researcher, market analyst and promoter. Currently, I am the general manager's assistant at Zhejiang-based Zhengbei (Pearl) Co. Ltd. and manager for development planning at Beijing Zhenbei Sci & Tech Co. Ltd. I'm looking for a better job.

Please visit my personal website at: [www.chenyurong.com](http://www.chenyurong.com)

Or call at: 13651033853

My email:

cyr@chenyurong.com, cyr@zhenbeiy.com

(You are welcome to send positions offered and wanted info to: [ayi@ynet.com](mailto:ayi@ynet.com). Beijing Today does not take any responsibility for the accuracy and authenticity of the information published in this column.)

**A Beijing-based English newspaper is looking for reporters, freelancers and editors. Chinese applicants should have university degrees in English or related majors and media experience. Foreigners from the UK and US with relevant media experience preferred. Please send your resumes and writing samples to: [hr@ynet.com](mailto:hr@ynet.com)**

Beijing Winter Book Market

Beijing Youth Study Festival

Young Beijing,  
a Place for Study

Time: December 24, 2004 - January 4, 2005

Venue: Ditan Park

- More than 200 exhibitors
- Great books
- Famous stars to sign and sell books
- Charity donations of computers, books and money
- Families drawing competition on environment protection, using environment-friendly pencils and recycled paper
- Consultancy on English learning and studying abroad
- A 400-square-meter map of China at Fangzetan hosted by Beijing Youth Daily
- New Year's cards, calendars and paper-cuts available
- Gifts for people born during the week
- Beijing Today's "English Clinic" and English Lectures on "Studying English with Public Media"



[Http://study.bjyouth.net](http://study.bjyouth.net) Hotline: 67709626





Maria Ma

# Chivast: Unqualified Agencies Destroying the Market

By Zhang Nan

Chivast Education International is one of the study abroad agencies that has been authorized by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Security and State Administration for Industry and Commerce to provide services to Chinese students hoping to study abroad and was the first agency permitted to operate nationwide. The agency belongs to the Chinese Service Center for Scholarly Exchange (CSCSE) and provides study services in around 20 countries, including Canada, Australia, France, Ireland, Spain, Japan, South Africa and Russia.

Maria Ma, general manager of Chivast, talked about her company, her experiences running it and her views on studying abroad during an interview with *Beijing Today* last Wednesday.

## Basics about Chivast

**BT: As one of China's earliest study abroad agencies, how has Chivast managed to continue to expand its business and strengthen its position in the competitive agency market?**

**Ma:** Chivast could be called the earliest agency that started study abroad services in China. Before August 1999, when Chivast was founded, the business was run by the CSCSE under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. Chivast has since taken advantage of CSCSE's many education resources and previous connections with Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, France and other places to expand its partnerships and collaboration with more countries and universities and education institutions overseas.

We strengthen our market position in two ways. First, we provide services and create new programs according to our customers' needs. Second, our staff are very professional and very informed. Around 22 percent of Chivast's agents have experience studying overseas and 23 percent hold master's degrees in foreign languages. We require all employees to have at least completed undergraduate education. And last but not least, we have a large pool of up-to-date resources on overseas institutions.

The current agency market is quite different than in the 1990s. Customers are becoming more rational and are thinking more about history, brand and



"Our staff are very professional and very well informed" - Chivast general manager Maria Ma

Photos courtesy by Chivast

experience when choosing agencies to help them head abroad. That is pushing agencies to be more responsible about the services and information we provide clients.

**BT: How does Chivast select overseas universities with which to establish relationships?**

**Ma:** We select universities that are accepted and recognized in their own countries. It is not important whether the universities are nationally-founded or private. The first thing we look for is whether a university is fully accredited and has a good reputation. We

often send our own people to check the universities for themselves and other times staff at Chinese embassies in different countries help us do such spot-checks.

## Domestic agency market:

**BT: How do you think the domestic agency market is developing?**

**Ma:** More people want to go abroad, but the way they are thinking about it is getting more reasonable. I'd say most people are thinking about their futures, and it's good they are considering it seriously. That also means customers' expect-

tations and demands of agencies are getting stricter. And with competition increasing, only the agencies that provide good, trustworthy services will survive, while those unable to meet the market's and customers' needs will be washed out. As I understand it, even some of the first agencies authorized in 2000 have gone under.

**BT: What do you think about the many unqualified agencies in China? Why do you think so many people are still using agencies they know are not recognized or qualified?**

**Ma:** The appearance of un-

qualified agencies has destroyed the normal development of the domestic agency market. People who don't think it through tend to go to unqualified agencies, as do people motivated just by the prospect of saving some money. That in turn has given the agencies room to survive. In recent years, there have been many reports about unqualified agencies cheating customers - people should pay attention to and learn from those instances.

**BT: In your opinion, what is needed to bring order to the domestic agency market?**

**Ma:** The most important factor is self-regulation. Recently, 10 agencies took the lead and more than 40 other participated in establishing the Agency Industry Association, which should be an important step towards normalizing the market.

**BT: Do you think it is possible that foreign companies will enter China's agency market and provide study abroad services?**

**Ma:** I don't think so. The main reason is that foreign companies do not understand Chinese customers' needs very well. It is important for an agency to know its market and customers well to provide appropriate services. It is difficult for foreigners to know about Chinese students' needs and their educational backgrounds.

## Suggestions to students:

**BT: What advice to you have for students considering studying abroad?**

**Ma:** I studied in the UK about 10 years ago. Studying abroad is a valuable and useful chance for students to broaden their minds, to learn about different culture and to increase their self-value. But before they head abroad, students should first be clear about what they want so that their courses mesh with their study and career goals.

Some young people want to study abroad only because many people are doing so. I would advise they think more clearly about things - studying abroad is a serious matter and can have real effects on one's future.

The other thing I would add is that when abroad, it is always important to remember an old saying which happens to be very true: when in Rome, do as Romans do.

**studying at the University of Adelaide in Australia. Does the university have any partner universities in China?**

— sprine

**A:** There are two universities in China that have credits acceptance agreements with the University of Adelaide: Huazhong University of Science and Technology and Dongbei University of Science and Technology. Students can study at these two universities for their first two years and then go to the University of Adelaide for another two years to earn bachelor's degrees from the Australian university.

(Edited By Zhang Nan)

**Q: I have a dream of**



Courtesy by British Council Beijing

## Popularity of IELTS Driving Demand for Examiners

Over 7,500 Chinese candidates have registered online to take the IELTS English tests since the British Council and the National Education Examinations Authority launched an Internet-based registration system on October 20.

Test takers can now pay their fees, check their candidate numbers, interview times and scores online.

More than 100,000 IELTS exams are given each year in China and the test is fast becoming the market leader in this country for English language examinations.

To keep up with the rapidly growing numbers of test takers, the British Council is looking for qualified English language examiners in cities across China including Xi'an, Changsha, Wuhan, Zhengzhou, Qingdao, Shenyang, Harbin, Changchun, Urumqi and Tianjin.

## State to Sponsor More Students

China will send 7,245 government-sponsored students abroad for education and training in 2005, the China Scholarship Council announced at a December meeting in Changsha, Hunan Province.

That figure would represent an increase of 3,100 students from this year, the council, the Ministry of Education's taskforce for selecting and sponsoring Chinese students to further their educations abroad, said.

Telecommunications, IT, high-tech agriculture, life science and health, material science and new materials, energy and environment, engineering science, applied social sciences and WTO studies are expected to be major fields of focus in the council's sponsorship efforts.

Since 1996, when government sponsored study posts opened to general competition, the council has sent 18,167 students abroad, 15,092 of whom returned to China by the end of September.

The council will release its quotas and accept applications at [www.csc.edu.cn](http://www.csc.edu.cn), from January 5 to March 10 next year.

## China Receiving More Foreign Students

Over 500 universities and colleges throughout China have obtained licenses to host and provide classes to foreign students, Zhang Xinsheng, Vice Minister of Education, noted at a reception party for new foreign students in China held earlier this month in Beijing.

Between 1978 and 2003, over 620,000 foreign students from 170 countries and regions came to China to further their educations. In 2003 alone, 353 Chinese universities and colleges received 78,000 foreign students.

South Korea, Japan and the US are the top three sources of foreign students in China. More than 6,000, or eight percent, of the foreign students in China receive some financial assistance or scholarship funds from the Chinese government.

## Agencies Set Up Body to Regulate Service Quality

The Beijing Federation of Study Abroad Service Agencies on December 16 announced the start of operations with the intention of ensuring the quality and reliability of services in the city's rapidly expanding study abroad agent sector.

Some 41 of the 78 agencies in Beijing voluntarily established the federation as a means of supervising the industry, handling complaints from customers and creating unified contract forms to promote reliability and consistency of services, said federation Chairman Ding Hongyu.

(By Aiyi)

## Ask Aiyi:

**Q: What kinds of students are qualified to apply to study in Norway? How long should it take to complete a bachelor's or a doctoral degree course there?**

— fishisy

**A:** Generally speaking, it should take four years to finish a bachelor's degree course and students are required to take two to three subjects. Completing a master's degree course takes two years and students are required to concentrate on one subject of study. There is no time limitation for doctoral courses. At the end of their studies, candidates must hand in dissertations to special committees -

if candidates successfully defend their dissertations, they get their PhDs.

To apply to Norwegian universities, students should be high school graduates with good command of English, Norwegian or other Scandinavian languages. There are two terms in the school year in Norway, which run from January 15 to June 15 and from August 20 to December 20.

**Q: I have a question about the use of mobile phones in Holland. Can you tell me something about mobile phone expenses and services there?**

— qq-fry

**A:** Mobile phones are the

most popular means of communications among Chinese students in Holland.

There are five main mobile phone service providers in the Dutch market. Ranked by share of market, they are KPN, Vodafone, O2, Orange and T-Mobile. T-Mobile tends to be the most popular among Chinese students because of its relatively low prices.

Just like in China, most people get mobile service in the form of monthly schedules or pre-paid cards.

Normally, students do not need to present identification to get pre-paid cards, which is convenient, but their charges are often expensive, around

0.35 Euro per minute. Pre-paid cards are a good choice for people new to Holland who do not yet have temporary residency cards.

Nearly every service provider, with the exception of T-Mobile, requires people to show effective residency cards, passports, proof of savings and other documentation to get monthly-hiring cards, called "abonnee" in Dutch. Once you have provided that information and filled in the forms, you can get your own mobile phone and phone number. Plans range from 6.30 euro a month to just over 42 euro with different services under each.

**Q: I have a dream of**





Photo by Sabu



Cosplay dress in the shop



## MANGA MANIA

By Sabu Zhang

Since it opened in July, the Fans membership book bar in Wudaokou has amassed a large band of dedicated comics buffs, Playstation 2 addicts and friends and fans of owner Guo Shuo, singer for the hip band Convenience Store on the Modern Sky label.

This is no mere comics store selling manga-related products, but a fan club for people to meet, get together and have fun. One comfortable corner of the shop is the perfect place to perch with a drink and read a comic book or jump into a PS2 game. Shelves are filled with Japanese manga books (15 - 25 yuan each) and anime DVDs (7 yuan each), all of which are available for rent.

They also sell game software, comic figures, avant-garde books, magazines and music CDs. There are even valuable issues of defunct magazines like *The Face* and *MCB (Music Colony Bi-weekly)*, as well as copies of better-known mags including *I-D*, *Vision* and *Q*. For manga fans serious about authenticity, there are original Japanese versions of comic books never translated

into Chinese.

A one-time payment of 500 yuan buys lifelong membership, the benefits of which include discounts on all rentals and 25 percent off all purchases. The 200-yuan, six month membership deal covers the price of renting one book a day, perfect for the budding manga enthusiast. The similar video VIP card, priced at 90 yuan, allows unlimited cartoon and movie rentals in three months. Plus Fans sells PS2 players for 2,600 yuan, supposedly the lowest price in town.

To serve its members, Fans runs regular get-togethers in the form of parties, gaming contests and weekend movie screenings. In time for the holidays, its fourth game competition, featuring driving and soccer games, is about to start. And on Christmas Day, Fans will hold a Noel party for members that will get people to chat, play games and make jiaozi.

**Where:** Room 1AB, Building 16, Wudaokou Huaqingjiayuan, Haidian  
**Open:** 10 am - 10 pm (10 am - midnight on weekends) **Tel:** 8286 7525

—Chasing Beauty—

## AngleFish Nail Salon and Bodhi Spa

By Shannon Lee

If you are looking for a place to escape the cold, raise your spirits and walk out feeling cuter than before, there are two new havens in town - the Anglefish nail salon and Bodhi spa.

Anglefish has a very warm decor with a pink color palette. The attendants are friendly and skilled in the nail arts. I chose to get a standard manicure, which is a relatively no-frills package with no real hand massage or fancy oils (the salon does offer hand treatments at an addition charge). However, they give a great manicure! It has already been a week and a half since I had my nails done and they look like I just walked out of the salon. To top it off they autoclave their tools to ensure they are clean. This is something very important to me since nail fungus is a drag.

The only real drawback that I could find was the seating. The salon has two rooms with many chairs for clients. If you are going for a relaxing manicure, you might be disappointed and get stuck in the middle of a loud gossiping group of friends. To combat this, I suggest that you just bring your own group of friends and take the place over.

Standard manicures run about 70 yuan and pedicures cost around 160 yuan. How-



Shannon Lee

ever, Anglefish is currently offering 18 yuan and 60 yuan promotional manicures and pedicures - both are definite steals.

After being greeted by the front desk receptionist, you are let into a cavern of hallways lit with candles and pleasantly perfumed by aromatherapy oils. The spa has a very peaceful ambiance with bubbling fountains, lush greenery and fresh orchids placed all around.

Once in your private room, you are given fresh white cotton outfits to wear during your massage. You can refresh yourself with a number of freshly squeezed juices and other beverages, and if you are feeling a little hungry there is also a large array of snacks available on Bodhi's complimentary menu. If you prefer to snack after your massage, there is a relaxation room where clients are welcome to sit, chat and enjoy the refreshments. The service and the setting will make any customer feel like a superstar. However, like anything good, it comes at a price. Whole body massages start at 138 yuan, but to celebrate its recent opening, Bodhi is offering special 88 yuan massages until late January.

**Where:** 17 Gongti Beilu, Chaoyang  
**Open:** 11:30 am - midnight **Tel:** 6417 9669 (Anglefish Nails); 6417 9595 (Bodhi)



Stairway to nail and spa heaven



Bodhi Spa Salon

Photos by Zhang Gaoke

— NEWLY OPENED —

By Jacqueline Yu

Hong Kong-based Judy Collection has opened its flagship store in the Jianwai Soho complex and Booster.J, a new brand from Hong Kong designer Kenny joined the collection on December 10.

The shop's opening fashion show presented a series of unisex pullovers made of cotton, corduroy and futuristic fabrics in youthful colors like pink, light blue, dark green, brown and white that looked very comfortable and have reasonable prices of 450 to 495 yuan. Matching jeans and corduroys pants sell for 795 to 850 yuan.

Aside from Booster.J, the racks at Judy Collection include other quality garments from such global megabrands Armani, Prada and Versace. On hand are many signature items tagged hundreds of yuan cheaper than their original prices.

Among the stars is a green lamb leather bag (998 yuan). For winter, there is a wide selection of short and mid-length trenchcoats and parkas. A solid collection of accessories and other fashion necessities, such as shoes and belts, is available, as well as such useful items as sheepskins that can made into improvised ponchos or fuzzy carpets.

**Where:** B 503, Jianwai Soho, Jianguomenwai Dajie, Chaoyang **Open:** 12 pm -7pm **Tel:** 5869 4701

## Booster.J Joins Judy Collection



Photo provided by Judy Collection

By Jacqueline Yu

Tired of going to nice parties with a bad-dressing husband? Drag him to the new Daniel Cremieux store at Guomao - if he frequently attends formal events, he has more than enough reason to add one or two beautiful suits or other garments, the type that French designer Cremieux is fame for, to his wardrobe.

The store, which opened on December 3, mainly stocks Cremieux's upscale citywear including suits, jackets, dress pants and accessories. The boutique's streamlined interior, featuring white walls, dark oak shelving and furniture and quality details, like chandeliers and attractive little paintings, helps keep the spotlight on the top-quality menswear.

The Cremieux line, started in 1975, is known for its snazzy shirts hand-sewn in Italy. Daniel Cremieux invented the patchwork pullover and shirt (often copied but never equaled), woolen cargo pants, new shirt collars, jacket shoulders and finishes for trousers, the flannel and nylon parka and pullovers in wool and cotton or silk and cashmere.

The designer derives much of his inspiration from the silver screen. "He... nurses a nostalgia for the 50's and for the ineffable elegance of those days. This explains why he enjoys watching old black and white films, so that he can pick out the small sartorial details 'which make all the difference': broader lapels, a shirt collar, bust darts, the way a tie is knotted," says a company press release. Color is fundamental in Cremieux's newest collection, which also emphasizes choice materials, quality fabrics and elegant patterns and jacquards.

Now, led by Stephane Cremieux, Daniel's son, the collection is taking aim at younger, more international customers, and the rich colors of the clothes target clients 25 to 50. The Guomao store carries two series of clothes, the silver label, consisting of formal suits priced from 1,800 to 20,000 yuan, and the blue label, which designates casual sportswear priced from 800 yuan to over 10,000 yuan.

## French Taste Blends Formal, Casual Trends



Photo provided by New Zone Fashion

Top quality materials, rich colors and refined cuts keep customers and trends coming back. Local men can now get just the thing for party events or less flashy, more practical business suits. The store even offers made-to-order service.

**Where:** WB 113, World Trade Center, 1 Jianguomenwai Dajie, Chaoyang **Open:** 9:30 am - 9:30 pm **Tel:** 6505 8847



## Performances

### Howling Wolf

Veteran Hong Kong pop singer Jacky Cheung directs and stars in his own musical, *Snow Wolf Lake*. This play tells the tragic story of lovers from different social backgrounds who become mired in the scandals and jealousy of friends and strangers. Cheung debuted the musical seven years ago. Mainland artists have been brought in for this latest Mandarin version.

**Where:** Capital Gymnasium, 5 Baishiqiao, Xizhimenwai, Haidian **When:** December 24

– January 1, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 180-2,280 yuan **Tel:** 6554 6666

### Raise the Red Lantern

The National Ballet of China brings Zhang Yimou's movie to the ballet stage. This is a haunting tale of a concubine, sold by her mother into a stifling world of jealousy and resentment. The jealousy of a rival concubine leads to tragic consequences as the women compete for the raised



red lantern which signals they are favored by their master.

**Where:** Poly Theatre, 14 Dongzhimen

**Dongcheng When:** December 24-26, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 180-1,000 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1188 ext. 5126

### Suffocation

In the drama, six college students attend a quiz show in the hopes of winning the game's cash prize. They play well and are poised to win, but then

make two mistakes. After the game, two of the students die mysteriously. After a few years, the remaining four students attend the quiz show again, but fail again and another two students die. The drama highlights the dark side of humans amid vanity and wealth.

**Where:** Bei Theatre, Beibingmasi Hutong, 67 Jiaodaokou Nandajie, Dongcheng **When:** 7:15 pm, until December 28 **Admission:** 80-180 yuan **Tel:** 6551 8181

### Kaishi Daji

Directed by veteran artist Gu Wei, starring Li Guangxia, Zhang Yongqiang, Sun Xing and Wang Gang.

The drama *Kaishi Daji* depicts a group of people of different classes in an amusing story set in China in the 1930s and 1940s.

**Where:** Capital Theatre, 22 Wangfujing **When:** December 24 –

January 2, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-280 yuan **Tel:** 6524 9847



# 2005 Bejart Ballet World Tour

Beijing audiences still remember the wonderful performance of Bejart Ballet on their last visit in 2001. This time, the company will perform four ballet masterpieces.

**Where:** Bei Theatre, Beibingmasi Hutong, 67 Jiaodaokou Nandajie, Dongcheng **When:** February 25-26 **Admission:** 180-1,280 yuan **Tel:** 6551 8181



## New Year

pm **Admission:** 30-280 yuan **Tel:** 6559 8285

### Berlin RIAS Symphony Orchestra 2005 New Year Concert

Founded in 1948, the Berlin RIAS Symphony Orchestra is one of the best-known youth orchestras in Europe and has performed in Israel, America, and Africa.

**Where:** Poly Theatre, 14 Dongzhimen Nandajie, Dongcheng **When:** December 28-29, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 100-2,005 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1188 ext. 5126



### Zubin Mehta and Israel Philharmonic New Year Concert

Zubin Mehta, one of world's most famous conductors, will take part in the Beijing New Year Concert with the famous Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. Mehta's last appearance in China was for the opera *Turandot* at the Forbidden City in 1998.

**Where:** Great Hall of the People, Tian'anmen Square **When:** January 1, 3:30 pm, 8 pm **Admission:** 200-2,800 yuan **Tel:** 6417 7845



### The New Munich Philharmonic Orchestra Beijing Debut

The New Munich Philharmonic Orchestra will make its Beijing debut to celebrate the New Year with Chinese audiences. The orchestra has performed at the Berlin International Music Festival and the Vienna and London music festivals. It has toured the world and has been conducted by some of the greats, including Charles Dutoit, Seiji Ozawa and Zubin Mehta. During the New Year concert, the orchestra will perform classical western pieces and several world-renowned Chinese works.



**Where:** Beijing Exhibition Hall, 135 Xizhimen Dajie, Haidian **When:** December 28-29, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 180-1,080 yuan **Tel:** 6835 4455

**American Pianist David Deveau: New Year Recital**

Top American pianist David Deveau will perform a New Year Recital in Beijing. Deveau has earned enthusiastic praise from major publications including the *New York Times*, the *Boston Globe* and the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.

**Where:** Forbidden City Music Hall, in Zhongshan Park, Xicheng **When:** January 3, 7:30

## Music



### Sun Nan's Vocal Concert

Chinese pop singer Sun Nan, who does not boast a handsome face but sings with a high, powerful voice, will hold a concert in Beijing. He has won the favor of many fans with his unique high voice and popular songs.

**Where:** Workers' Gymnasium, Sanlitun, Chaoyang **When:** tonight, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 200-2,000 yuan **Tel:** 6501 6655



### Live Music at Nameless Highland Bar

Music Enthusiasts and underground music lovers will have a musical feast this weekend. Friday night features bands Second Hand Rose, CMCB, Xingfu Avenue and Bolan Tonghua. AK-47, Xie Tianxiao and Cold Blooded Animal and Bing Yong perform Saturday night.

**Where:** Nameless Highland Bar, Building 14, Anhuili Xiaoku, Yayuncun, Chaoyang **When:** tonight and tomorrow night, 9 pm **Admission:** 60 yuan (50 yuan for students) **Tel:** 6489 1613

## Exhibitions

### He Sen Solo Exhibition – Shadow Shaped

He Sen's oils create an atmosphere of smoky misanthropy. His subjects are the fashionable youth from the reform period, who, in He Sen's eyes reflect the emptiness of the new generation.

**Where:** Art Now Gallery, inside Beijing Workers Stadium opposite Gate 12, Chaoyang **When:** Tuesday till Sunday, 11 am – 7 pm, until January 23 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6551 1632



### Dialogue Between Art and Commerce

This is a modern art exhibition exploring the meaning and relationship between art and commerce, involving paintings, cartoons, installation, video and sculpture by 13 contemporary artists. This multimedia exhibition is intended by the artists to open a dialogue to raise people's attention to art. Supported by Beijing New Millennium Art Gallery.

**Where:** Ti'an Centre, 6 Beisihuan Donglu, Chaoyang **When:** daily 2 pm – 6 pm, until December 30 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 13911166261



### Dream Factory or Rubbish Heap

Artist Zhang Xiaotao's personal art exhibition presents his latest art creations at Beijing Tokyo Art Project to reveal his understanding about life, reality and dreams. The exhibits are works made between 1998 and 2004 as a record of changing reality that

has different meanings for different people.

**Where:** Beijing Tokyo Art Projects, 4 Jiuxianqiao, Chaoyang **When:** daily 10:30 am – 5 pm until February 5, 2005 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8457 3245



### Group Exhibition at Qin Gallery

Eight famous Chinese artists – Luan Xiaoqie, Pang Yongjie, Xiao Hong, Xiao Se, Yu Xiaodong, Li Qiang, Feng Feng and Luo Qi – display their latest oil paintings.

**Where:** Qin Gallery, 1-1 E, Huaweili, Enjoy Paradise, Chaoyang **When:** daily 9:30 am – 5 pm until December 31 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8779 0461

## Movies



### Romeo and Juliet

Directed by Franco Zeffirelli, starring Olivia Hussey, Leonard Whiting, Milo O'Shea and Michael York. Zeffirelli's version of the Shakespeare play gained fame as something of a "youth trip" movie. This is because Zeffirelli broke the long-standing tradition of casting over-aged players as the lovestruck teenagers. Seventeen-year-old Leonard Whiting plays Romeo, with fifteen-year-old Olivia Hussey as Juliet.

**Where:** Italian Embassy, 2 Dong'erjie, Sanlitun **When:** December 30, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2187

## Personal Classifieds

### Accommodation

2 bedrooms, 1 living room apartment near Dawang Lu, close to Balizhuang subway station, is ready for lease. 3500 yuan per month. 70 square meters. Contact: Mr. Chen, 13601246000

### Language Exchange

Jimmy Mu, a Chinese man who can speak English fluently, wants to know more about foreign culture and customs. He wants to make friends with foreigners who want to study Chinese and want to do business in Beijing. Email: mushuhaiaa@hotmail.com, Tel: 8345 6137

A female Chinese German learner wants to make some German-Chinese or German-English language writing friends. Contact: grace\_mzy@yahoo.com.cn

### Professional Help

Zeng Guangrong, a 26-year old masters graduate, is looking for a position as a teacher in a college or high-school, or as an interpreter, translator, secretary, assistant or general business staff. She is proficient in English and Japanese. Contact: 13661321575; Email: joyfriend\_78@yeah.net

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## TV and Radio Highlights

HBO

24 Friday

The Two Towers 9 pm

25 Saturday

Daddy Day Care 9 pm

26 Sunday

Full Throttle 8 pm

27 Monday

Red Water 9 pm

28 Tuesday

Enough 8:05 pm

29 Wednesday

Evil Never Dies 7:30 pm

30 Thursday

The Tuxedo 9 pm

CCTV-9

Monday – Friday

Around China 6:30 am

Culture Express 8:30 am

Nature and Science /

Chinese Civilization 11:30 am

Culture Express 2:30 pm

Nature and Science /

Chinese Civilization 5:30 pm

Dialogue 7:30 pm

News Updates /

Asia Today 8 pm

Sports Scene 11:15 pm

Saturday

Travelogue 9:30 am

Center Stage 11:30 am

Sunday

Sports Weekend 10 am

Documentary 10:30 am

This Week 12:30 am

China Radio International 91.5 FM

Monday – Friday

Easy FM Afternoon 2-7 pm

Fun in Beijing 5-5:30 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

Saturday

Music Memories 8:05-11 am

Euro Hit 40 12:05-1 pm

Musique Sans Frontières 6:05-8 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

Sunday

Music Memories 8:05-11 am

Jazz Beat 6:05-8 pm

Joy FM 9:05-11 pm

We are glad to receive your feedback. We will print employment, language-exchange and accommodation information for individuals. Feel free to email us at bjtodayinfo@ynet.com or call 6590 2518

By Zhang Jianzhong





# Cold Mountain Pleasure



By Arron Chang and Hester Xu

Consider yourself lucky that Beijing is relatively cold in winter and surrounded by mountains. The first snowfall finally arrived this week. In such a warm winter, the thought of skiing on man-made ski trails provided by many of the ski resorts in the mountain areas sounds intriguing.

## Nanshan Ski Village

It lies inside Miyun County and is some 60 kilometres from the city. Like many other ski resorts in Beijing, it claims to be the largest and best equipped, with the greatest variety of ski trails in north China. The resort has a total of 11 ski trails for beginners, medium level and advanced skier and boasts the first snowboard trail in the country, a joint project recently realised with the help of an Austrian partner. The snow trails are served by two cable lifts and nine ropeways and all major equipment is imported, including a set of Austrian made snow making machines. Nanshan has a team of more than 40 instructors for ski learners and a special snowboarding school headed by Austrian instructors to train snowboarding fans.

Very comfortable accommodation is available in several Norwegian style villas and the log cabin fashioned guesthouses by a small artificial pond. The restaurant offers a variety of choices from the exotic Alpine Norwegian style menu, and northern Chinese home-style food and BBQ dishes are also available. For some refreshment and hot drinks, there's the Lavender Tea House at the top of Nanshan Mountain.

shan Mountain.

**Prices:** 20 yuan for admission, 100 yuan for two hours' skiing, 150 yuan for the weekend; 320 yuan for a standard room in the log cabin guesthouse, 260 yuan for the weekend.

**Where:** Shengshuitou Village, Henanzhai Town, Miyun County

**Tel:** 8428 6688, 6445 0990/ 91 / 92

**Parking capacity:** 300 cars

**Getting there:** take the Airport Expressway and turn left at Kuliushu Roundabout, then turn left at Hongqiao Roundabout and head along Shunmi Road.

## Beijing Badaling Skiing Field

It's two kilometres west of the famous Badaling Great Wall. Although only the first-phase construction has been completed and further expansion is already in sight, it already has two 800-metre trails for beginners, two 600-metre trails for medium level skiers, one 800-metre run for skilled skiers with a vertical drop of 120 metres and a 2,300-metre toboggan run, the longest in Beijing.

Besides a snow making field striding over several hilltops, the resort provides a host of winter facilities including accommodation, restaurant, stores selling ski equipment and a gym. As most skiers are not likely

to carry their own equipment, the resort has prepared enough outfits for hire, most of which are new and imported from Austria or Japan. If you don't speak much Chinese, you may even find a foreign instructor there.

**Prices:** 20 yuan for admission, 100 yuan for two hours' skiing, 140 yuan for the weekend; 300-500 yuan per night for a standard room.

**Where:** Badaling Town, Yanqing County

**Tel:** 6501 0330 / 31

**Getting there:** Leave Jingcheng Expressway (Badaling Expressway) at Badaling exit (No. 18 exit), turn left at the car park's exit and go west for three kilometres.

## Beijing Huaibei International Ski Resort

Located inside the beautiful Jiugukou Natural Scenic Spot, Beijing Huaibei International Ski Resort is the only ski resort where the magnificent beacon towers of the Great Wall can be seen from the ski runs.

Served by two cable cars and six ropeways, the ski trail consists of one advanced skier's trail, two medium level runs and three for beginners. Some 20 instructors working in the Sino-French ski school in the resort provide various training courses for new learners and skilled skiers alike. Because of its surrounding view, the resort is often chosen by the municipal government to host special events.

**Prices:** 20 yuan for admission, 60 yuan per hour, 80 yuan per hour for the weekend; 280 yuan per night for a standard room.

**Where:** 48 Hefangkou Village, Huaibei Town, Huairou County

**Tel:** 6966 1177

**Parking capacity:** 500 cars

**Getting there:** Take Jingshu Road (Jingmi Road) for Huairou, turn left at Kaifang Roundabout and follow the main road, go north for five kilometres after passing Yanqi Lake.

## Beijing Shijinglong Ski Resort

Beijing Shijinglong Ski Resort inside Yanqing County is the first ski resort in China to supplement the laws of nature by using man-made snow on its ski trails.

Among the six ski trails (for beginners, medium and advanced skiers), the most challenging one is apparently the 1,000-metre-long ski trail with a vertical drop of 300 metres. The resort also features a snowboarding area, "snow sauna" and hot spring bath, both of which are quite rare among ski resorts in China.

**Price:** 20 yuan for admission, 100 yuan for two hours' skiing, 150 yuan for the weekend; 260 yuan per night for a standard room.

**Where:** Dongyangfang, Zhangshanying Town, Yanqing County

**Tel:** 6919 1615 / 13 / 17 / 14

**Parking capacity:** about 1000 cars

**Getting there:** take Badaling Expressway from Madian Bridge for Yanqing County, then take the Longqingxiang section of 110 National Highway for Huangbai Temple, and go west for 1 kilometre. Alternatively, take 110 National Highway at Changping Roundabout.

## Jundushan Ski Resort

It is five kilometres north of the Xiaotangshan Mountain Hot Spring Resort, making it one of the closest ski resorts to the city. Its seven ski trails include two 1,000-metre-long trails for medium level skiers and one 1,200-metre run for advanced skiers

with a vertical drop of 247 metres and a maximum gradient of 40 percent. To cater for night owls, a high power lighting system was recently installed on four trails for night ski service. If you don't feel like driving back to the city in the middle of the night, stay in the Russian style villas at the foot of mountains.

**Prices:** 20 yuan for admission, 100 yuan for two hours' skiing, 150 yuan for the weekend; 328 yuan per night for log cabin villa, 348 yuan for a standard room during the weekend.

**Where:** 588 Zhenshun Village, Cuicun Town, Changping District

**Tel:** 6072 5888

**Parking space:** for 1000 cars

**Getting there:** leave Badaling Expressway at exit 13C and continue to Xiguan Roundabout, turn left and go to Dongguan Roundabout, then drive forward.

## Where to Find the Real Snow

While most ski resorts in Beijing have become more dependent on man-made snow in recent years, there's a better chance to find real snow in the ski resorts of Hebei Province, making man-made snow a useful complement on the ski trails. And thanks to its proximity to Beijing, Hebei is another favourite choice among many ski lovers in the capital.

Lying in the most mountainous area near Zhangjiakou, a city some 200 kilometres northwest of Beijing, Saibei Ski Resort features a whole set of ski trails for beginners, middle level and skilled skiers. After watching the daily ski show, you may ask an instructor to teach you some basic skills before starting your first ski run. If you're more concerned with doing it the right way than just having some fun and being laughed at, the instructors can be strict but are attentive to your requirements.

Getting there is relatively easy. Just take the Badaling Expressway from Madian. After passing Yanqing and Shacheng, go through Zhangjiakou and leave the city at Dajingmen. Take a right turn 3 kilometres from Chongli Town, and drive another 18 kilometres to the ski resort.

Only 50 kilometres from Zhangjiakou, Wanlong Ski Resort is much bigger and better equipped with 11 ski trails for skiers of various levels, and a trail with a vertical drop of 550 metres among them. It has been used as a training field for the Chinese and Japanese national ski teams. Going to Wanlong takes basically the same route as Saibei, and it is also near Chongli.

Yabuli Ski Resort near Haerbin, a thriving northern city about 1,000 kilometres from Beijing, is another top ski resort in China. As the site of the 3rd Asian Winter Games, the resort now offers winter downhill and cross country skiing and snowboarding, as well as ice skating and tobogganing plus a host of other winter activities. There are a total of 11 ski trails, but if you can survive the trail with a vertical drop of 600 meters, you're already a very skilled skier. Two 3-star hotels and a youth apartment have enough rooms to accommodate Beijingers seeking a chance to have fun in some real snow.

The closest airport to Yabuli is Mudanjiang, which can be reached by a one-and-a-half hour flight from Beijing. Or, you can choose to land in the larger airport in Haerbin for a sightseeing trip first. Getting local transport in both cities is easily organized.



Map by Yan Zhang

Dec 10 2004